

PEEP AT THE PILGRIMS

IN

SIXTEEN HUNDRED THIRTY-SIX

A TALE OF OLDEN TIMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF DIVERS UNFINISHED MANUSCRIPTS,

Come, listen to my story,  
Tho' often told before,  
Of men who passed to glory  
Thro' toil and travail sore;  
Of men who did for conscience' sake,  
Their native land forego,  
And sought a home and freedom here,  
Two hundred years ago.      FLINT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR GEO. B. WHITTAKER,  
AVE-MARIA LANE.

1825.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY COX AND BAYLIS, GREAT QUEEN STREET.

A

PEEP AT THE PILGRIMS.

CHAP. I.

What? Do I love her,  
That I desire to hear her speak again,  
And feast upon her eyes?      SHAKESPEARE.

ON the following afternoon, Captain Standish was obliged to leave home on business; and, having charged Alexander to entertain Major Atherton till he returned, the lad proposed his favourite amusement of fishing. They were soon launched upon the Bay; but, from whatever cause, the fish proved shy, which, however, only stimulated the perseverance of Alexander, who toiled manfully; and with much of his father's ardour, applied himself to the task as if his life depended on success.

Atherton was certainly less zealous; his eyes continually reverted to the distant shores of the Gurnet, and his thoughts were probably occupied by certain associations connected with it; for his companion, while skilfully managing his own line, observed that his kinsman's remained long in the water, and only stirred by the dull motion of the waves. When he finally drew it out the hook was without bait, and Alexander, who had seen it glitter before it reached the surface, exclaimed,

"Upon my word, Major Atherton, that fish had a dainty morsel from your hook, and he must have worked cautiously to take it off without pricking his gills."

"Really," said Atherton, "there is no sport for us to-day; I think the scaly race have all gone to bed in broad sunshine."

"Look, here are two notable fellows I have caught," returned Alexander, "and here comes another; no—he has bit, and gone off with himself."

"I should like to be off too, Alexander, if it please you," said Atherton; "there is really more toil than pleasure in this tedious angling."

"I will land you if you wish it," said Alexander, "and return here by myself; my father will laugh at us if we carry home no more spoil."

"Yonder is Plymouth," said Atherton, "if we can push in there I will pass an hour or two, and be ready to return with you."

In a few moments Major Atherton stood on the Plymouth beach, and while deliberating what course to pursue, he moved slowly on, and, as if unconscious what path his feet had chosen, started at finding himself by the oak tree which shaded the dwelling of Mr. Grey. "I will not call again to-day," he thought, and passed leisurely on, though not without a strict survey of the premises. No person was visible; and Miriam's kitten, which lay sunning herself on the doorstep, was the only animated object in the vicinity. Retracing his steps, Atherton was soon again on the sea shore, and not far from the Pilgrim's rock, close to which the Virginia pinnacle lay at anchor. Thin groves of trees were here and there scattered along the shore, apparently the second growth of large forests, which had undoubtedly once covered the plain where the village now stood, and which, on the first arrival of the colony, presented the appearance of a level field, though

retaining vestiges of former cultivation, and bearing marks of the rude implements with which the natives were accustomed to till their ground, and prepare the ridges for their corn plantations. These appearances confirmed the report of some friendly savages, that it had once been the site of a flourishing Indian town, whose inhabitants were swept away by a contagious malady, which had desolated the country from the Bay of Plymouth to the shores of the Narraganset.

As Major Atherton was passing along the skirts of a small wood, a faint rustling among the withered branches, caused him to look round; and, at the same instant, the low humming of a sweet female voice directed his attention to a spot, where, leaning carelessly against a trunk of a tree, his eyes rested on the figure of Miriam Grey. She evidently did not see him, and was busily arranging some gay autumnal flowers and fresh evergreens into a bouquet, occasionally stopping to examine them with minute attention, while her countenance expressed the pleasure derived from her simple amusement. It is uncertain how long Atherton might have continued to admire in silence the graceful negligence of her attitude, and listen to the plaintive melody of her voice, if, in changing her position, a corresponding motion on his part had not apprised her of his proximity. A vivid blush, which dyed even her forehead with crimson, convinced Atherton that he was observed, and her confusion was in a slight degree shared by himself. In the first start of surprise, Miriam had dropped a part of her nosegay, and, to relieve his embarrassment, at which he felt surprised, Atherton sprang forward, and raising it from the ground, returned it to her; retaining, however, a sprig of evergreen, which he gallantly placed in his own bosom, without receiving even a reproving glance, unless a still deeper glow could be interpreted as one.

“I hope,” said Atherton, “I shall not interrupt your employment, though I have sadly deranged the flowers which you were assorting with so much taste.”

“It will only prolong my occupation,” returned Miriam, “which, trifling as it is, has served to pass away a few moments, while waiting for my cousin Lois, who has wandered away, I know not whither. But perhaps you may have met with her?”

“I have not,” said Atherton, “though, indeed, my walk has not been extended far from this spot, at least since I caught the sound of your voice, which attracted me to it.”

“I was scarcely aware,” said Miriam, “that my idle hum rose into an audible sound, or I should have been more guarded in a place like this.”

“A place exposed to intruders, would you say?” asked Atherton, smiling.—“Believe me, my intrusion was unpremeditated; and I hope you will not punish me by regretting that you charmed me awhile, though unconsciously, with the delightful melody of your voice.”

“I should scarcely expect,” said Miriam, “that our New-England music could have any charms for you, who have been accustomed to the skilful harmony of your own country.”

“And yet,” replied Atherton, “no music was ever so pleasant to my ear as the simple psalmody of your congregation, which my mother used to sing, and delighted to teach me in my childhood. It is long,” he added, after a brief pause, “since I listened to those strains, which your voice recals to my memory, like the charm of renewed happiness.”

“I fear it has also awakened unpleasant remembrances,” said Miriam, who observed a shade of sadness pass over his countenance.

“They are recollections of pure and heartfelt happiness,” returned Atherton; “and though alloyed by many painful hours which have since intervened, I would not for worlds obliterate them from my memory.”

“But,” said Miriam, “would it not be prudent to repel associations which have at least as much pain as pleasure associated with them?”

“Not if you exclude music,” said Atherton, “that is one of the last enjoyments I should be willing to sacrifice; and never has my heart more deeply felt its influence, than when listening to the melody of untutored voices in your assemblies, and by your fire-sides.”

“We humble puritans,” said Miriam, with arch gravity, “are a psalm-singing people; but our untaught harmony is rarely honoured with the approbation of those who chaunt to the sound of the organ in high places.”

“Their commendation,” returned Atherton, “must at least be sincere and disinterested.”

“We regard it but as the incense of a vain sacrifice,” replied Miriam, in the same tone; and then quickly resuming her usual manner, she added, “but it will be night ere we reach home, if we wait much longer for Lois. I know not but she may be already there, though she left me only to go a short distance, and promised to return directly.”

“Shall I seek her, and tell her you have been waiting long and impatiently?” asked Atherton, who feared his presence embarrassed her, or might be considered improper in a place where strictness of manners was carried to an extreme.

“I have not been very impatient,” returned Miriam, “though were it not for giving you so much trouble——”

“Do not speak of trouble,” interrupted Atherton; “any thing which obliges you will give me pleasure. So farewell, and in a few moments I hope to return successful.”

Atherton looked back more than once as he pursued the way in the direction which Miriam pointed out, and saw her still on the spot where he had left her, and again busied with her flowers, until the windings of the path concealed her from his view. But though her fingers were employed with the flowers, her thoughts seemed wandering to other subjects; for she had plucked every blossom from its stem, and strewed the ground with their leaves; and when only a single stalk remained in her hand, she looked at it in surprise, and exclaimed audibly,—

“My beautiful flowers! what have I done to them?”

“And may I ask, fair Miriam,” said a voice behind her, “what subject of contemplation has so entirely absorbed your mind?”

Miriam started, and turning round, saw Mr. Calvert by her side, and with perfect calmness, she replied—

“It would be difficult to answer your question, sir; I am myself scarcely conscious what ideas engrossed me at the moment you appeared.”

“Perhaps,” said Calvert, in a tone of irony very usual with him, “perhaps you were admiring the beauties of nature, or drawing moral reflections from the fall of the autumnal leaf.”

“No,” said Miriam, pointing to the scattered flowers, “I was destroying the beauties of nature, instead of admiring them; and my reflections were certainly less melancholy than the season and this place are calculated to excite.”

“And what is there of melancholy connected with this place?” asked Calvert; “just now it seemed to me a scene of happiness which almost excited my envy.”

Miriam, without noticing his last remark, pointed to a level bank, which arose abruptly from the ocean directly at their feet; it appeared to have been once cultivated, but was then covered with coarse grass, and a few stunted evergreens.

“This,” she said, “is the burial-place where our poor colony, during the dreadful winter which succeeded their arrival, were obliged to consign more than half their number who fell victims to the distress and fatigue of their situation. Many an honoured and virtuous head reposes here, who, while their memory is fading away on earth, are doubtless receiving a bright reward for their sufferings and pious labours where there are no more trials, nor any change.”

“But I see no graves,” said Calvert; “not even a single stone to mark it as a place of interment.”

“No,” returned Miriam; “for so much were we reduced by sickness and death, that it was thought expedient to level the ground and plant it, lest the natives should discover our weakness, and take advantage of it when we were unable to resist them. But the spot is no less sacred in our eyes than if marked by the most stately monuments of marble.”

“In a few years,” said Calvert, “all will be forgotten; and even now the living have ceased to mourn for those who lie here.”

“They are no longer mourned,” said Miriam; “but their untimely fate cannot be remembered without feelings of tenderness and regret; particularly by those who shared their dangers, and were mercifully spared to longer and happier days.”

“You have imbibed these feelings,” said Calvert, “from the gloomy traditions of the good people around you; you were then an infant, and incapable of realizing dangers or misfortunes.”

“True,” said Miriam; “yet every affecting incident is impressed upon my mind as strongly as if I had then been mature in age and reason; and I should think even a stranger would feel a touch of interest and sympathy in such calamities.”

“They do,” said Calvert, “and none more deeply than myself, in all which concerns the colony, in all that interests you, Miriam; but pardon me, if I say this cloud of sadness is less suited to your countenance than the smiles which usually adorn it.”

“Your trifling is ill-timed, sir,” replied Miriam, “and we will drop a subject which seems to have wearied you. Now, that I have answered all your questions, may I be permitted to inquire what accident has brought you hither so unexpectedly?”

“Accident,” said Calvert, “has often fortunately conducted me to you.”

“Yesterday, for instance,” interrupted Miriam, “when your high-mettled steed came so suddenly upon us, to the great alarm of my palfrey, and the imminent hazard of our necks.”

“Yes, yesterday,” continued Calvert, “but to-day my intrusion is entirely voluntary; and I confess I was drawn here by a spell which my heart is unable to resist.”

“A spell!” said Miriam with simplicity: “really, Mr. Calvert, I do not understand you.”

“Then you must be the only one who is ignorant of the witchery of your charms,” said Calvert.

“Have you witches in Virginia, sir?” asked Miriam, gravely; “you seem familiar with such beings, but they have not yet disturbed the peace of our colony.”

Calvert looked at her in some perplexity, to discover if the grave simplicity of her manner was real or affected; but before his doubts were satisfied, she added,—

“Perhaps I am indebted to their counsel for the favour of this interview.”

“No,” replied Calvert, “I have long regarded you from my pinnacle yonder, and only waited till you should be left alone before I joined you.”

“Indeed!” said Miriam; “I was not aware of being a subject of observation; but had you reached this place a few moments sooner, you would have conferred on Major Atherton, as well as myself, the pleasure of your society.”

“That,” said Calvert, “can be desired by neither of us; and what I would say to you Miriam, can concern yourself alone, least of all the person whom you have mentioned.”

“I must beg you to be brief then,” said Miriam; “for I momentarily expect his return, as he left me but to seek my cousin, and methinks I even now hear their footsteps.”

As she spoke she turned from him with the air of one who listens attentively; and Calvert, with ill-concealed impatience and vexation, retreated from her a few paces in silence. But as no one appeared he presently returned, and looking at her attentively, asked,—

“How is it that a stranger like Major Atherton has excited so much interest in this place, where, till within a few weeks, his very name was unknown?”

“Like all other strangers of fair and honourable character,” said Miriam, “he has claims upon our hospitality which it is our duty to discharge.”

“And what evidence have you,” asked Calvert, “that this character belongs to Major Atherton?”

“All that we can have of a foreigner,” said Miriam,—“the evidence of those friends whose letters commended him to our favour: and his good conduct since he has been with us has gained him the esteem of many, who are not used to bestow it lightly and without cause.”

“Not to mention his heroic attempt to save your life,” returned Calvert, “which has doubtless obtained your individual regard.”

Miriam was about to reply when they heard the sound of approaching voices; and immediately Lois Grey with Henry Weldon and Atherton, emerged from the grove of trees, directly against them. Major Atherton, who was speaking with animation, stopped abruptly when he saw Calvert conversing alone with Miriam; and the idea that she had perhaps wished his absence to receive the visit of another, excited feelings which he could with difficulty repress. Calvert marked the variations of his countenance, which he considered a confirmation of suspicions he had before entertained; nor did he fail to meet the deep blush of Miriam, excited by the apprehension that her situation might be misunderstood by one whose good opinion she felt unwilling to forfeit. Shaking off her confusion, as much as possible, however, she advanced to meet them, and, taking her cousin’s arm, said to her,—

“I have been long expecting you, Lois; but the delay is sufficiently explained, since I find you have not been indulging a solitary ramble.”

“No,” said Lois, “I chanced to meet Mr. Weldon, and, —”

“And you walked on,” interrupted Miriam, “quite forgetful of your promise and my lonely state.”

“I will not trouble you with an explanation,” returned Lois, “as you have probably been so agreeably engaged that my absence was scarcely regretted.”

“Well,” said Miriam, “we must now hasten, for it is already past the time when we promised my father to be at home.”

They shortly regained the highway, where Atherton separated from the party, though urged by Lois Grey to return with them, pleading, as his excuse, that Alexander Standish would be waiting for him. Alexander, however, was not on the beach, nor was his boat visible on the water; and Atherton, concluding he had returned without him, determined to walk back to Captain Standish’s, which, as he chanced to be in a musing mood, was by no means a disagreeable alternative.

It was then nearly dark, and Atherton was passing hastily along, when he met Mr. Calvert just issuing from the gate at Mr. Grey’s. Calvert looked at him in surprise.

“I thought, sir,” he said, “you were long since comfortably seated in the Captain’s warm-quarters; you will be late if you have all that distance to go to-night.”

“That is of little consequence,” replied Atherton, “the path is as familiar to me by night as in the noon-day.”

“But you have taken the longest way,” pursued Calvert; “this road is leading you far round from the direct route.”

“It is a matter of choice,” returned Atherton: “and I presume I am at liberty to take whichever suits my convenience or pleasure.”

“Certainly,” said Calvert, “and I am myself too sensible of the peculiar attractions of this, to be surprised at your preference.”

Calvert spoke in a sarcastic tone, which was calculated to irritate the feelings of Atherton; but he prudently refrained from answering, and coldly bidding him good night, pursued his solitary way.

Captain Standish had been expecting the return of Major Atherton with some impatience; and when he at last heard him enter the house, he knocked the ashes from his pipe and called loudly to bid Mistress Saveall put the supper on the table instantly.

But Mistress Saveall’s shrill voice answered from her dominions, that “it took time for all things; and Master Alexander’s fish could not be fried in a minute.”

“They have been at home a good hour, or more,” said the Captain; “and less time than that might suffice to make them as brown as a hazle-nut.”

“Yes,” replied the dame; “and as cold as a stone, withal; and then who but me would be blamed when they were served up, and not fit to eat?”

“Use your hands, Mistress, instead of your tongue, and it please you,” said the Captain; “these women can do nothing without prating like magpies all the time about it.”

He pushed the door, not very gently, as he concluded: and the reply of the housekeeper, who, with the becoming spirit of her sex, seemed resolved to give the last word, was lost to the ear of Atherton, who had been entertained by the rest of the domestic dialogue; from which he inferred, that his prolonged absence had been displeasing to all parties.

But the Captain’s good humour returned the moment his kinsman entered the room; and rising from his elbow-chair, he said, gaily,—

“Well, Edward, you are really taken with a roving spirit; but if you play the truant often, I fear good Mistress Saveall’s small stock of patience will be quite exhausted.”

“Perhaps,” said Atherton, “occasional exercise may strengthen that valuable property; and I think, sir, you would have reason to thank me for any improvement of the kind.”

“Why, yes,” returned the Captain; “but to tell the truth, I am not over anxious to have my own patience put to the test very often. I fear it would not come forth, like gold from the furnace, purified by the trial.”

“I believe the virtue is not apt to flourish well in our profession,” returned Atherton. “But I have not yet explained the cause of my absence, which, I am sorry to believe, has kept you so long waiting for me.”

“No matter,” replied the Captain; “it has given us better appetites, and we can talk over the matter while eating our supper.”

“Here comes Alexander,” said Atherton; “and now I may hope to know if he forgot his promise to stop for me at the beach.”

“No,” said Alexander, “I waited for you till almost sunset, and then I met Hobamock, who told me he saw you in the woods with Miriam Grey; so I thought you would go home with her, and it was of no use to stay longer.”

“I chanced to meet her, in walking, as I was about to inform you, Captain,” said Atherton, carelessly, “and her cousin Lois, with Mr. Weldon and Calvert.”

“But Hobamock told me you were alone with Miriam,” returned Alexander; “and shall I tell you, Major, something more that he said about you?”

“No,” said Atherton, quickly; “Hobamock’s eyes are waxing dim, I fancy; and he must have mistaken the rest of our party for pine stumps, or savin trees.”

“Hobamock’s eyes are sharp enough,” said the Captain; “but you say Mr. Calvert was there? I think that young gallant will find himself mistaken if he hopes to carry away our rose-bud from New-England.”

“Women are said to be fond of novelty and variety,” said Atherton; “and perhaps she may prefer the warmer and brighter climate of Virginia.”

“No; no such thing,” returned the Captain; “besides, Calvert is a churchman, and her father would almost as soon see her married to the Pope of Rome, if his Holiness might be permitted to take unto himself a lawful wife.”

Major Atherton paused till he had twice measured the room with his steps; but willing to learn more of the Captain’s opinion on that subject, he at length said,—

“Calvert is insinuating in his manners and address, and may overcome the scruples of Miriam, if not her father’s; it is hardly possible that Mr. Grey would withhold his consent if the happiness of his only child were concerned.”

“Now, Edward Atherton,” said the Captain, smiling, “I perceive you judge of us from your own good mother, who was all mildness and charity; she was a Puritan, too; but we, true Nonconformists, Separatists, Independents, or, as godly Mr. Cotton of the Massachusetts has, at last, styled us, Congregationalists, hold it a sin to enter into a covenant with you heretics and idolaters; and believe me, even Miriam Grey herself would rather marry that prosing, preaching Benjamin Ashly, than to choose from among the best of you.”

“Really, sir,” said Atherton, almost indignantly, “you would give us an exalted idea of Miriam Grey’s taste and discernment.”

“Not so,” said the Captain; “but it is a part of her creed; and she would think it rebelling against the light of conscience, to err one jot or tittle from that. I do not think,

though, that the girl has any fancy for Master Ashly, unless it may be to indulge her merry humour in laughing at him now and then; for she hath a light heart; ay, and as innocent too, as the smile on her rosy lips. But here is a savoury smell of supper, and I think we may all do tolerable justice to it to-night."

"I can answer for myself," said Atherton, "that it was never more welcome; a long walk certainly promotes the appetite wonderfully."

"A long walk and a long fast," returned the Captain; "so now for a vigorous onset." And, drawing their chairs around the table, Mistress Saveall's choice dishes and good cookery, soon diverted the conversation to more epicurean topics.

But the interesting subject which had previously engaged them was still predominant in the mind of Atherton, and followed him even to the retirement of his own apartment. The incipient predilection which he had imbibed for Miriam Grey, was heightened by a renewed opportunity of seeing and conversing with her; and the undisguised admiration of Calvert, which seemed to set every competitor at defiance, only stimulated his interest. While both pride and affection shrunk from the idea of yielding to his claims, or being superseded by his superior address, his heart became insensibly animated with the hope of success, and every obstacle served only to increase the ardour of his pursuit. The religious prejudices of her father, and perhaps her own, Atherton considered but too lightly; and, in spite of all that Captain Standish had said, with the sophistry of love he persuaded himself that, could he win her affections, it would be easy to remove every doubt and difficulty from her mind. He remembered the happy union of his parents, which their difference of faith had never, for an instant, interrupted; and the slight barrier of a creed appeared to him too vain to excite any serious uneasiness. His imagination glowing with enchanting hopes and visions of happiness, he resigned himself to repose, and in sleep pursued the airy dreams which had occupied his waking thoughts.

The next day and the next passed away, and Major Atherton was prevented by a variety of circumstances from revisiting Plymouth; but on the afternoon of the third, which was Sunday, he recollected to have been particularly edified by the preaching of Mr. Reynal, and expressed to the Captain a wish to hear him again.

"Just as you please, cousin Atherton," said the Captain. "Mr. Reynal is a sound and orthodox divine; and perhaps his wholesome doctrine may help to settle your doubts, if you have any, and lead you into the right way. But I hope, before long, we shall have a worthy minister of our own; it is now four years since we separated from the church of Plymouth, and in all that time we have had only the prophesyings and exhortations of the gifted brethren, for our public teaching."

Atherton declined the Captain's offer of his best horse, which he would fain have pressed into his service; and having become well accustomed to the way, he walked on at a brisk pace, and reached the place of his destination just as the people were assembling for the afternoon service. As he mingled with the congregation who were ascending the hill leading to the place of worship, he observed Mr. Calvert at a short distance, apparently endeavouring to overtake him. Atherton did not wish to avoid him; he therefore slackened his pace, and in a moment was joined by Calvert.

"Really, Major Atherton," said Calvert, "you must be marvellously fond of exercise to walk hither so very often."

“And you,” returned Atherton, “seem equally averse to it; Captain Standish was only yesterday remarking on your long absence from his house.”

“I have business and other affairs which engage my time,” said Calvert, carelessly; “but pray tell me, Major Atherton, if you have turned puritan in good earnest?”

“Why do you ask me that question, sir? I have never avowed any deviation from the principles in which I was educated.”

“And being educated by parents of different persuasions,” replied Calvert, “you were probably instructed in the faith of both, and feel at liberty to adopt whichever shall suit your inclination; at present you seem much inclined to favour the religion of this land.”

“I have ever followed the faith which my father professed,” said Atherton, “though I am not so bigotted as to absent myself from the worship of those who differ from me.”

“It is a good rule,” returned Calvert with a smile of peculiar meaning, “to conform in matters of such trifling importance, and doubtless very politic in certain cases.”

“I do not perfectly comprehend you, sir,” replied Atherton; “and if it is not too much trouble, must beg you to explain.”

“Oh, I dislike explanations above all things,” said Calvert; “but now be candid, Major, and tell me if you really came eight miles to hear good Mr. Reynal’s long sermon, or to catch a stray beam from certain bright eyes, which may chance to wander this way?”

“Probably, sir, you judge of my motives from your own feelings and wishes,” said Atherton, colouring highly.

“Very likely,” returned Calvert, coolly; “and I know of no more rational way of judging of what lies beyond our observation.”

“In that case,” said Atherton, “I should choose to know that my judge was a man of correct and honourable feelings.”

“Certainly,” replied Calvert; “and of course you will not dispute my pretensions to the office, though I never set myself up for a miracle of goodness, as some officers in our regiment did: there was Captain R—, for instance, not to mention one or two others.”

“I believe you were never accused of raising your standard of perfection too highly,” said Atherton.

“No, I hate canting, and never try to pass for better than I am,” said Calvert, pointedly; “except,” he added, “in cases of necessity: for instance, here we are at the entrance of the tabernacle, and must strive to look as demure as possible; for it is as much the fashion to wear long faces in a puritan meetinghouse as it is to practice smiles and bows at court.”

As he finished speaking, they both entered the house, and accepted of seats which were civilly offered them near the door. A moment after Mr. Grey and his family came in, and passed on to their usual places. This circumstance seemed unnoticed by Calvert, till the eagerness with which the eyes of Atherton pursued them, excited a transient smile; and during the remainder of the services, his countenance was marked by a gravity which might have passed for the expression of a serious and devout mind. As soon as the congregation was dismissed, he took the arm of Atherton, who was disposed to linger

behind, and walked to the bottom of the hill with him, where they stopped by mutual, though tacit consent.

“May I ask what direction you are about to take?” said Mr. Calvert.

“Home, that is to Captain Standish’s,” replied Atherton; “and if you are disposed to return with me, I will promise you a welcome reception from my host.”

“Another time I will try it,” said Calvert; “but now I am going to our friend Mr. Grey’s, and will make you the tempting offer to accompany me; now do not say you have no wish to go there.”

“I shall not,” returned Atherton; “on the contrary, it would give me pleasure, but they are accustomed to keep this day so sacred, that the visit of a stranger might not be acceptable.”

“As you please,” said Calvert, “but I have never been received otherwise than graciously at any time.”

“If,” said Atherton, “you can suit your conversation to circumstances, as well as you have your countenance this afternoon, I am not surprised at their forbearance.”

“Far better,” replied Calvert. “I discourse of theology with the father, and settle all controverted points to his full satisfaction; and sing psalms with the daughter and niece, till they believe me on the point of abjuring the mother church, with all her pomps and ceremonies; and if they don’t end by begging me to crop my hair, and round off my ears, I shall be satisfied.”

“And that is not trying to appear better than you are, is it?” asked Atherton.

“Not better, only a little different,” said Calvert; “besides, you forget my saving clause, and this is a case of necessity. But hush! they are close by us, even now.”

Atherton looked round, and saw Miriam and Lois Grey, almost at his side; but they were busily engaged in conversation, and did not observe them, till Miriam accidentally dropping her handkerchief, Atherton and Calvert, at the same instant stooped to raise it from the ground. The latter gained the prize, and Miriam received it from his hand with a smile; though Atherton fancied a still brighter one animated her features, as she returned his salutation; and the idea lessened the mortification of his defeat, and the reluctance he felt to part from her. Calvert bade him farewell with an air of triumph which seemed to say, “I have the advantage over you;” and Atherton, conquering a strong inclination to join them, turned into another direction, and was soon in the well-known path which led to the residence of Captain Standish.

## CHAP. II.

“Ah! si vous pouviez comprendre  
Ce que je ressens pour vous,  
L’amour meme n’a rien si tendre,  
Ni l’amitie de si doux.  
Loin de vous, mon coeur soupire,  
Pres de vous, je suis interdit;  
Voila ce que j’ai a vous dire,  
Helas! peut-etre, ai je trop dit!”

ON the ensuing week Major Atherton was an almost daily visitant at the house of Mr. Grey. Every morning he found some excuse for going to Plymouth; and Captain Standish, who was at that time particularly occupied with some affairs of his own, was pleased to hear of his kinsman’s frequent engagements at the Governor’s or Mr. Bradford’s; though not always aware that these engagements were concluded in the society of Miriam Grey. He was received by every member of the family with the utmost cordiality; and the eloquent blushes of Miriam, the engaging confidence and graceful timidity which alternately marked her manner towards him, encouraged his hopes, and increased the attachment he cherished for her; which became deeper and stronger, as every interview disclosed to him some new charm in her mind and character. There was, also, enough of variety, uncertainty and doubt, to create perplexity and induce him to conceal his sentiments, till more fully convinced that they would meet with a favourable reception.

The conduct of Mr. Calvert was well calculated to render Atherton mistrustful of Miriam’s affection; he was continually near her; and Atherton often sighed, as he observed her, with apparent pleasure, enter into conversation with him, and listen to his descriptions of foreign countries and the adventures of other days, which he had always at command, and possessed the pleasing art of relating with a spirit and humour that could not fail to amuse.

Atherton, like other lovers, was ingenious in tormenting himself with visionary fears, and too little skilled in the female heart, to detect the subtle evasions to which it has recourse to conceal an acknowledged prepossession: his hopes were constantly fluctuating; and, often depressed by circumstances, from which, with more experience, he would have drawn the most flattering inferences. Calvert always assumed the aspect of a favoured lover: conscious of his advantages, he seemed secure of conquest; or, if at any time uncertain, he artfully concealed it, and wore an air of presumption, from which the more delicate and honourable mind of Atherton revolted. He was evidently no stranger to the views and feelings of his rival; but he appeared totally to disregard them, and resolved not to admit the possibility that he could become a successful candidate for the favour of his mistress. His manners were frank and careless; but Atherton, as his visits became more frequent, remarked an occasional caprice and coldness: he also fancied that Mr. Grey began to regard the attentions which both himself and Calvert directed to his daughter with a suspicious eye. He had no wish to conceal his sentiments, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to disclose them, both to Miriam and her father.

Atherton called at the house one evening, and was not displeased, on entering the parlour, to find it occupied by Miriam alone. She was carelessly reclining in a huge elbow chair, with her eyes fixed on the blazing fire, which glanced brightly on her figure and countenance, and revealed an expression of unusual pensiveness. Without raising her eyes as he entered, she continued to hum the air of a tune which Atherton had himself taught her, and of which he was particularly fond, because it had been a favourite with his mother. It was a beautiful sacred melody, that even Mr. Grey approved, and though the flageolet, on which Atherton played with uncommon skill, was not of puritanical invention, he had frequently listened with pleasure as its soft melody mingled with the sweet and rich tones of his daughter's voice.

Miriam, however, perceived Atherton even sooner than he wished; and, hastily rising, she offered him a seat, saying, with a smile,—

“Excuse my inattention, sir, but I thought it was Lois who entered.”

“And you, I hope,” said Atherton, “will forgive my interrupting the reverie which you seemed to be enjoying.”

“The interruption is quite fortunate,” returned Miriam, “for I was at that moment attempting your favourite air, and need your assistance to go through with it. I fear my ear must be growing dull, for I never made so much discord in a simple tune.”

“Mine must be dull, indeed, if you did,” said Atherton, “for I was admiring the ease and correctness with which you sung it. But you must allow me to hear you again, in order to judge which of us is mistaken.”

“If you will accompany me,” replied Miriam; “and, in the mean time, some lights will look more cheerful than this fitful blaze.”

“They will spoil this pleasant twilight, which is the most delightful season of the day,” said Atherton.

He took the flageolet from his pocket as he spoke, and Miriam, who had nearly reached the door, returned, and, after stirring the fire into a brighter glow, commenced the song, which she executed without a single false note; though the sound of the instrument often died away, as Atherton, in listening to her, seemed fearful that the softest breath might interrupt the harmony which she created.

Major Atherton was at all times strongly alive to the charms of music, but the voice of Miriam Grey had acquired an influence over his feelings at which he was often surprised, yet seldom endeavoured to resist. As soon as she had finished he rose abruptly from his chair, and for several moments paced the room in silence. Miriam, perplexed at his conduct, regarded him almost with alarm; but she at length ventured to say, in a timid accent,—

“I fear I have done wrong, Major Atherton, and again unfortunately awakened some painful remembrances.”

Atherton suddenly stopped, and advancing towards her, took her hand, and looking earnestly in her face, replied,—

“*You* do wrong, Miriam? *you* awaken painful remembrance? No; believe me; when with *you*, the past is forgotten, and my presumptuous hopes dare to image scenes of future happiness, which your smiles have encouraged, and your lips alone can sanction.”

Miriam, in silent confusion, averted her blushing face from his ardent gaze; but, as he eagerly watched the variations of her countenance, the brilliant glow faded into a deadly paleness, and with a look of alarm, she hastily withdrew her hand, which he still

retained within his own. Atherton followed the direction of her eyes, and, with a start of surprise, beheld Mr. Grey, who had entered unperceived, standing with folded arms, and regarding them with severe and fixed attention. Atherton instantly recovered his self-possession, and, with the calmness of conscious integrity, awaited the expected reproof. But Mr. Grey, after the first scrutiny, resumed his usual gravity, and, taking a chair, he coolly said—

“I would not interrupt you, Major Atherton; you would doubtless say nothing to my daughter which may not reach my ear also.”

“By no means, sir,” returned Atherton; “and I have long wished for an opportunity to explain myself on a subject which nearly concerns my happiness.”

“It is a subject to which I may not listen,” said Mr. Grey. “Young man,” he added, emphatically, “you have gained my esteem, and I owe you a debt of gratitude which can never be cancelled; yet my religion and my principles are more precious unto me than the gratification of any worldly feelings, the enjoyment of any temporal pleasure, even than the earthly happiness of my child. Deceive not yourself, therefore, with the vain belief, that I shall sacrifice my duty to the idle wishes of an indiscreet and youthful passion.”

Mr. Grey spoke with mildness, but in a tone of decision, which chilled the ardent hopes of Atherton, who was about to answer, and plead his suit with the earnestness of passionate feeling, when a glance of intreaty from Miriam checked his utterance; and the entrance of Lois Grey, at the same moment, determined him to defer the conversation till a more fitting time. He was, however, too much disturbed to enter into general discourse, and soon after took his leave, depressed in spirits by his unexpected repulse, though still resolved to bear up against all difficulties, and if possible to overcome them.

Mr. Grey, after the departure of Atherton, remained a few moments absorbed by his own reflections; and then seating himself by his daughter’s side, he fixed his eyes upon her as if searching her inmost thoughts.

“Why do you look at me so earnestly, sir?” asked Miriam, endeavouring to shake off the embarrassment which his manner, combined with recent circumstances, had caused.

“I have ever been accustomed, Miriam,” he replied, “to read in your countenance the feelings of your heart; I would learn, if I may still rely on it, and expect your confidence.”

“Can you doubt it?” said Miriam; “till I have once deceived you, father, you cannot, ought not, to suspect me.”

“I do not, my child.—Major Atherton too is candid, and he has not sought to disguise his sentiments, which were apparent to me, even before the events of this day.”

“Dear father!” said Miriam, deeply blushing, “you mistake;—he has not, he only——”

“I will spare your blushes, Miriam,” interrupted Mr. Grey. “It is not my intention to question you concerning what he said; though had I not unexpectedly heard his words, the confusion which my presence excited could not be mistaken.”

“You regard the subject too seriously, sir. I beg it may not occasion you one moment of anxiety.”

“Did it concern you less deeply, Miriam, it would not; but the dread that your affections may become engaged to one with whom you can have no connection, has already given me much uneasiness.”

“I trust my inclination will never render me forgetful of my duty,” said Miriam; but less firmly than she had before spoken.

“Most fervently do I hope so,” returned Mr. Grey, again regarding her with attention; “and I place much confidence, Miriam, in the strength and rectitude of your principles.”

“I do not think they will be tried very severely in this instance,” said Miriam, smiling.

“Take heed lest you fall into a snare through presumption and vain self-confidence, Miriam,” said her father. “I have forewarned you of the danger, and it remains with you to avoid or overcome it.”

“I know not how to avoid it,” said Miriam, gravely; “but it is written, ‘resist the devil, and he will flee from you;’ and I think, father, Major Atherton cannot prove more irresistible than he.”

“If you rely on your own strength alone, Miriam, you may find, too late, that you have ‘leaned on a broken reed.’”

“Dear father!” said Miriam, archly, “do you think Major Atherton so very attractive, that I cannot see him without danger of admiring him, more than you approve?”

“You know that I regard him highly, Miriam; and, in his outward conduct, since he has sojourned amongst us, have seen much to commend; but had there been less, I would not withhold my gratitude from the preserver of my child.”

“And has not that entitled him to my esteem and gratitude, likewise?” asked Miriam with emotion.

“Most assuredly it has,” said Mr. Grey; “nevertheless, Miriam, we do endanger our faith by holding familiar intercourse with the zealots of a perverse and antichristian church; with whom we are commanded to have no fellowship, but rather to reprove them; except, as the apostle doubtless meant, so far as the laws of hospitality and courtesy shall require.”

“But, sir, we know that Major Atherton has been taught to respect our opinions, and even imbibed from his mother a prejudice in their favour; and at all times he has cheerfully conformed to our customs, and devoutly joined in our worship.”

“We can place no dependence, my child, on an outward conformity, without some evidence of a willing spirit, and this external reverence is most likely to mislead your inexperience, and conceal the real danger.”

“Dear father!” said Miriam, earnestly, “you shall find I am not so very weak and irresolute, but that, though only a timid girl, I possess some portion of the resolution which enabled you to endure and overcome so much for the establishment of that pure religion which you have taught me, by precept and example, to prize so highly. No,” she added with a blush; “even should your fears be realized, I could never become an apostate from the faith which I have received from you.”

“Continue to value it more dearly than your life,” said Mr. Grey; “and never, for an instant, place it in competition with any earthly passion. However firm, however sincere, you may now feel yourself to be, believe me there would be no security for your principles if the sophistry of love were united with the perverse, but plausible arguments which the sons of prelacy can so well command and urge for their subversion.”

“And do you believe, father, that the truth can so readily yield to error and falsehood?”

“Women are born to submit,” returned Mr. Grey, “and, as the weaker vessel, it is meet they should be guided by those who have rule over them. I well know how easily they become converts to such as they regard with affection. Your mother, Miriam, was wandering in the mazes of error when I first beheld her; and though Providence was pleased to give me favour in her eyes, and to make me the instrument of plucking her, as a brand from the burning, yet, but for the love which she bore me, she would probably have lived and died in the bosom of an idolatrous church.”

“You were armed with the weapons of truth,” said Miriam, “and she could not resist their force; but you will not, father, deny the influence of our sex. If the entreaties of Dalilah could subdue Samson, how much more powerful must be the arguments of religion from the lips of a virtuous woman? Even the apostle saith, ‘The believing wife shall sanctify the unbelieving husband.’”

“It may have been so, my daughter; but the same apostle also saith, ‘Be ye not yoked together with unbelievers;’ which is but to provoke the displeasure of Heaven, and incur its judgments, as did the children of Israel, when they took them wives from the daughters of the land.”

“Yet, father, did not Moses marry an Ethiopian woman? and was not Miriam the prophetess reproved, and smitten with leprosy, because she spake evil against it?”

“That cannot be an ensample to us,” said Mr. Grey, “to whom the Lord doth not, as unto his servant Moses, speak face to face; and though your temporal happiness is most dear to me, Miriam, never could I consent to promote it by permitting your union with one, who might endanger your eternal interests by leading you to trust in baseless ceremonies, and to bow down to the graven images of Episcopacy.”

“Fear not for me, father,” said Miriam, “I have at present no wish to change my situation; and if ever I shall be induced to quit you, it must be with your free consent, your full and decided approbation.”

“I fully trust your word, Miriam; yet I wish not, like unhappy Jephtha, to bind my daughter to a state of celibacy. I would rather urge you to increase your usefulness by a worthy choice, and like a true ‘mother in Israel,’ faithfully discharge the duties of your sex and station; that before my eyes are closed I may have the satisfaction of seeing my descendants rising up to honour, and advance those civil and religious institutions, of which we, ‘through much tribulation,’ have laid the ‘foundation stone.’”

Miriam made no reply; and after a few moments of unbroken silence, Mr. Grey resumed the discourse.

“I feel my heart eased of a heavy burthen by this conversation with you, Miriam: and in the strengthened conviction that you have sufficient discretion and virtue to direct you, I shall commence my voyage with more resolution, and feel the pain of parting from you less severe.”

“If I *could* be permitted to go with you!” said Miriam; “indeed, father, I cannot reconcile myself to the thought of a separation; but I can submit to any thing if you will only take me with you.”

“It is impossible,” said Mr. Grey: “the difficulties of the voyage, the persecutions which still await our devoted sect,—every thing forbids it. You must remain here, Miriam, and strive not to indulge any anxious thoughts or repining wishes.”

“But so many long months must pass away before you will return, father! and till now you have never gone from me scarcely for one short week.”

“The time will fly swiftly, my child, though it seems long in looking forward; and with your cousin Lois, who has ever been dear as a sister to you, it cannot pass unhappily. I feel comforted in leaving you with her; she is older and more experienced than yourself, and fully competent to advise you in every circumstance and situation.”

“But Lois will soon have other claims on her affection,” said Miriam; “and I begin already to fear that Mr. Weldon will engross more than his share.”

“You need have no fear on that subject, Miriam,” said Lois, who had hitherto remained silent. “I think my heart is large enough to contain more than one object of affection.”

“But there is one whom I need not name, Miriam,” said Mr. Grey with some hesitation, “whose heart has long been bound to you; and I would fain see you disposed to reward his faithful love with the favour it has merited.”

“Indeed, father,” said Miriam, “I would be contented with the smallest corner of Lois’s heart, rather than possess the whole of his.”

“You always speak lightly on this subject, Miriam; yet you know it is one which I have long regarded with satisfaction; and I do still hope that you will not always remain wilfully blind to the excellent qualities of Master Ashly.”

“Now do not call me a stubborn girl, father; but in truth I cannot value his goodness as it deserves; and it would be unjust for me to snatch the prize from some maiden more enamoured of his worth.”

“Bring forth your ‘strong reasons,’ Miriam, and tell me what you particularly object to in him.”

“Nothing in *particular*, but every thing in *general*. Forgive me, father, but he has really no one quality which I should call agreeable.”

“And is piety and sincerity nothing?” asked Mr. Grey; “are integrity and uprightness of character so very disagreeable?”

“No, indeed, father; but I would choose a companion who has a lighter heart, and less solemn countenance, to lead me through the journey of life. I fear I should tire of virtue itself, if always before my eyes in so ungentle a form. Master Ashly is so image-like withal, that, though in no danger of worshipping him, I might possibly commit the sin of converting him into a laughing-stock.”

“You cannot object to his person, Miriam,” said Mr. Grey, with an air of displeasure; “the youth is well-favoured, and tall and comely as a cedar of Lebanon.”

“Yes, quite tall enough,” returned Miriam; “and, as Captain Standish once said, as stiff as the ramrod of his musket. Cousin Lois,” continued the laughing damsel, “did it ever strike you that Mistress Rebecca Spindle would make a suitable helpmate for him?—a little too ancient perhaps, but otherwise far better qualified than myself; and, it may be, less inclined to shun so advantageous an alliance.”

“You are strangely perverse, Miriam,” said Mr. Grey; “but I cannot suffer my worthy young friend to be thus trifled with; you must be unaccountably prejudiced, or else prepossessed in favour of some other. I hope Mr. Calvert has not caused you to misprise our plain New-England youths.”

“No, sir,” replied Miriam; “Mr. Calvert is very well in his way; but he wants some of Benjamin Ashly’s rare qualities. I would choose a man more like,—like myself, father, with just a pleasant mixture of the good and agreeable.”

“And the evil, you should add, child,” said her father, smiling.

“I left that for you father, and rightly judged that you would not forget the addition.”

As she finished speaking, Mr Calvert entered the room; he was less animated than usual, and seemed inclined to remain silent and thoughtful.

“You are unusually serious to-night, Mr Calvert,” said Miriam, “and look like the bearer of ill tidings; pray let us hear quickly, if you have any thing to communicate.”

“I have nothing to tell, nothing at all,” replied Calvert.

“Are you unwell, then?” asked Lois Grey.

“No; but, to tell you the truth,” he said, with an air of frankness, “I am rather out of temper.”

“Oh, if that is all, we need not be alarmed,” said Miriam; “it is not often a fatal malady, though I understand it is a very common one in warm climates.”

“But the climate does not justify the offence,” said Mr. Grey; “and the scripture saith, ‘he that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.’”

“I find I must justify myself, at all events,” returned Calvert, “though it is a foolish affair, and not worth mentioning. I met Major Atherton as he came from here just now, and he seemed in a very ill humour, and resolved to quarrel with me; but I was fortunate enough to calm him, and save myself from being run through with his sword.”

Calvert observed the complexion of Miriam vary as he spoke; and Mr. Grey, in a tone of real concern, inquired—

“And what was the occasion of all this, sir?”

“I really cannot tell,” said Calvert; “it seemed to arise from a mere trifle; and I attributed it to some circumstance which had taken place here.”

“I thought,” replied Mr. Grey, “that Major Atherton had better principles, and more command over his passions, than to engage so lightly in a quarrel.”

“As to that, sir,” said Calvert, carelessly, “you know we of the Church are not all of us so strict as perhaps we should be; and the Major has been in the army quite long enough, to acquire high notions of honour and a love of fighting.”

“I will speak to him touching this matter,” said Mr. Grey. “A word in season is ‘like apples of gold in pictures of silver,’ and a friendly admonition perchance may prove of service to him.”

“I think, sir,” said Calvert, “it can be of no avail, and all will be forgotten between us in a few days. Major Atherton is hasty, but not ill-disposed; and it is very possible I may have said something to vex him.”

After this apparent frank apology and concession, which were certainly calculated to set his own disposition in a favourable point of view, Mr. Calvert immediately changed the conversation. He hoped he had said sufficient to impress the mind of Mr. Grey unfavourably towards Atherton, whose growing intimacy in the family he viewed with jealousy, and began to entertain serious apprehensions that he would eventually interfere with his plans, and supersede him in the affections of Miriam.

### CHAP. III.

Slunk from the cavern, and the troubled wood,  
See the grim wolf; on him his shaggy foe  
Vindictive fix, and let the ruffian die.            THOMSON.

MAJOR ATHERTON had quitted the house of Mr. Grey with feelings of chagrin and disappointment more keen than he had ever before experienced. It was true, in the blushing confusion of Miriam, he had read nothing to reprove his presumption or discourage his hopes; but the language of her father, too plain to be misunderstood, convinced him that he would never sanction the marriage of his daughter with one, whom he considered wilfully bound in the fetters of error and superstition; and, under such circumstances, he could scarcely expect, or even wish to attach the affections, or receive the hand of Miriam. These thoughts engaged his mind as he slowly retracted his steps from the door, which he had recently entered with very different feelings; and his hand yet rested on the wicket, and his eyes lingered on the casement, still faintly lighted by the blazing fire within, when he was startled by a slight touch upon his shoulder, and, turning quickly round, he saw Mr. Calvert standing by his side.

“What is your will with me, sir?” asked Atherton, in a tone of impatience which he could not at the moment repress.

“To pass through the gate when you see proper to quit your hold of it,” said Calvert, in his usual careless manner.

“It is entirely at your service now,” returned Atherton, with recovered composure. “I was not aware that I detained you from entering,” and at the same time he threw open the gate, and walked on.

Calvert deliberately closed it, and followed him.

“We will let it rest for the present,” he said, “though I apprehended just now you were about to bear it away as Samson did the doors of the Philistines. This seems a favourite spot with you, Major; it is not the first time I have found you lingering about it.”

“You do me great honour, sir,” replied Atherton, “by interesting yourself so warmly in my concerns; am I to understand that you have become a spy upon my actions? or do I interrupt your own walks and arrangements?”

“A little of both,” returned Calvert. “As to the first, you well know it is desirable to learn the force and position of an adversary whom one may be called to engage; and, for the second, I believe we are both drawn hither by the same attraction, and it is a pity our plans should interfere.”

“I have no wish to enter into competition with you, sir,” said Atherton, haughtily; “and may ask how long I am to be favoured with your company?”

“So long as we shall find it mutually convenient and agreeable,” replied Calvert.

“You will then excuse my saying it is *now* time that we should part,” returned Atherton.

“Certainly,” said Calvert, with provoking *sang-froid*; “but as all loyal subjects of our good king are privileged to walk in his highway, I shall take the liberty of going wherever it suits my pleasure.”

The manner, even more than the words of Calvert, irritated the already harassed feelings of Atherton, and stopping abruptly, he said—

“I would counsel you to keep at my sword’s length, sir, or you may have cause to repent of your temerity;” and as he spoke, he laid his hand on the hilt of his weapon.

“Nay,” said Calvert, composedly, “if two cannot walk without falling out by the way, it is indeed time to separate. If this should reach the long-eared generation of puritans, we might be put in the stocks, or perhaps be degraded from the title of gentlemen, which is a marvellously ingenious punishment of their own invention for the special correction of all naughty grown-up boys.”

“And perhaps deserve it too,” returned Atherton, almost instantly repenting of his haste. “I have no wish to signalize my courage in a foolish quarrel with you; and, if I mistake not, yours was sufficiently tested by a duel some few years since.”

“Yes,” replied Calvert, “and my sword is still of the same good metal, and entirely at your service. Meet me in Virginia, England, or even here, when I am the husband or rejected lover of Miriam Grey, and we will try our skill on the most friendly terms; but a rupture at present would at once destroy all hopes of success.”

“Neither now or ever shall I meet you in that way,” said Atherton; “and I should despise myself, were I capable of harbouring a revengeful purpose, and delayed the execution from motives of policy, or through the mean hypocrisy of appearing better than I am.”

“In plain words,” replied Calvert, “you would say that you despise me. I admire sincerity above all things, Major, and thank you heartily for your opinion; but, to be consistent, methinks you should fly into a passion with the fair Miriam, as you have with me; it would impress her quite differently from the sweet melody of your flageolet.”

“Perhaps I shall, when she uses the insulting language which you have holden to me,” said Atherton, with difficulty bridling his indignation.

“As to that,” replied Calvert, “if you can obtain her hand, trust me, you will be enough favoured with such music; these sweet-tempered damsels are mighty apt to become shrews when galled with the yolk of matrimony.”

“If such are your ideas,” said Atherton, “I wonder you should court an evil which it is so easy to avoid.”

“One cannot well do without a wife,” returned Calvert; “and it is meet to choose from among the fairest and most promising, to render the condition as easy as possible; and you will allow, Major, that a little timely competition is a wonderful stimulant in seeking such an one. I shall really think myself irresistible if my simple eloquence prevails against you, aided as you are by that bewitching musical pipe, whose silver tones reached my ears just now as you tuned it to your mistress’ praise.”

“You can have been in waiting at the gate no short time,” said Atherton, “to have heard what passed within so long before I met with you.”

“I was listening in silent admiration,” said Calvert, “even as the trees and stones of old did to the lyre of Orpheus; but that heathenish comparison would be thought downright heresy here.—I should say, like unto Saul, who was charmed by the harp of David, when he played with his hand skilfully before him.”

“and the evil spirit was not laid in either case it would seem,” said Atherton; “but I should think you would have been more comfortably situated by a cheerful fire, on such a chilly night as this.”

“I was unwilling to interrupt a delightful scene,” returned Calvert; “a forbearance which you would doubtless exercise in similar circumstances.”

“I have certainly given you strong proofs of my forbearance this evening,” replied Atherton.

“Admirable!” said Calvert, ironically; “so I will no longer oblige you to exercise it, but take your vacant seat by the side of Miriam, and try to dispel the fascination which your music may have thrown around her. Indeed, Major, that is love’s own language, and gives you a decided advantage over me; I tell you frankly, I shall exert myself to counteract its influence.”

“You will keep within the limits of truth and honour, I trust,” returned Atherton.

“Of course,” said Calvert; “I think I shall have no occasion to resort to stratagem, though you know it is always considered allowable in love and war. So good night to you; and may pleasant dreams—but not of Miriam Grey—hover round your bed.”

Atherton parted from him with a hearty good-will, and a firm resolution to avoid as much as possible so troublesome a companion for the future; and he also resolved, during his long walk, to abstain, for a time at least, from the dangerous society of Miriam Grey.

But the following morning was so mild and brilliant, that Major Atherton was strongly tempted to resume his pedestrian habits; and, though still determined to shun the presence of Miriam Grey, he was soon after breakfast far advanced on the road to Plymouth. He had gained the midst of the woods, through which his path lay, when he heard the sound of several voices, and particularly distinguished that of Peregrine White, which rose above the others; and in an instant the young man perceived and called to him.

“You are the very person I was seeking,” he exclaimed, springing over the underbrush to meet him; “and now you make good the old proverb, ‘the devil is always nearest, when you are speaking of him.’”

“I thank you for the flattering comparison,” said Atherton; “but why is my presence so much desired, just now? You seem to have a goodly band of attendants already, and collected for some warlike purpose, I should judge from their appearance.”

As he was speaking half a dozen young men joined them, all armed with muskets, among whom were Mr. Calvert and Benjamin Ashly.

“We will choose you for our leader, Major Atherton,” said Peregrine White, “so put yourself at our head, and give the word of command.”

“Perhaps we shall not all obey it,” said Calvert; “and I, for my part, nominate Mr. Ashly for Captain General.”

“I am a man of peace,” replied Ashly, “and unused to wield the weapons of carnal warfare; being called only to maintain a strife with the foes that are within me.”

“You must be a valiant warrior if you can keep them all in subjection,” said Peregrine White; “I would rather undertake to conquer a whole tribe of Indians.”

“But what enemy are we to attack, now?” asked Atherton; “is it visible or invisible, man or beast?”

“Nothing more or less than a half-starved wolf,” returned Peregrine, “which has taken up his abode in these woods; and having, probably, heard of Master Ashly’s hospitable disposition, and finding his house convenient, has paid several visits among his sheep, and last night made bold to feast upon the fatted calf.”

“A troublesome enemy, truly!” said Atherton, “and I would gladly help you to get rid of him; but there are already so many of you, that my presence would be quite useless; particularly as I have no fire-arms with me.”

“No matter,” returned Peregrine, “you must go with us, if it is only to see our sport; though I dare say Master Ashly will lend you his gun; for he scarcely knows which end to fire out of: and, in case of danger, he can run up into a tree and look on.”

“You speak without knowledge, Master Peregrine,” said Ashly; “for, though I was not bred a soldier, I have been well instructed how to carry a musket.”

“How to carry it is one thing, and how to use it is another,” returned Peregrine.

“But I will use it,” replied Ashly, doggedly, “against the destroyer of my flocks and herds, even as David, who rose up and slew the bear that stole the lambs from his father’s sheep-fold.”

“Oh that was nothing,” said Peregrine, “compared with this wolf, which is the fiercest beast of the forest: have a care, Master Ashly, that you do not turn your back upon him, or you may chance to have an unpleasant gripe from his tusks.”

“I trust we shall be preserved from his rage,” said Ashly, “like as the prophet Daniel was saved from the jaws of the lions, in their den.”

“I begin to be of Major Atherton’s opinion,” said Calvert, “that there are too many of us: seven armed men against one or two poor beasts is quite unmerciful, besides the danger of frightening them into their strong holds; and so, Major, if you are inclined to turn back, I will accompany you; and, I fancy, I can guess whither you are bound.”

“I have decided to remain here,” returned Atherton; “but, if you intend to return, and will trust your gun with me, I will engage to make a good use of it.”

“Excuse me,” replied Calvert; “it was merely in the wish of enjoying your society that I made the proposal; but I am too accommodating to be repulsed by trifles; and since you conclude to proceed, whither you go there will I go likewise.”

“Your extreme complaisance quite perplexes me,” said Atherton, “and I feel totally unable to return it as it deserves.”

“Pray do not trouble yourself,” replied Calvert; “I would not have you for a competitor in every thing; and it quite encourages me, to hear so formidable a rival acknowledge his deficiency, even in trifles.”

“I confess my deficiency in many things in which you seem to excel,” said Atherton, “though I certainly do not, at present, feel any desire to attain them.”

“That last clause in your sentence,” said Calvert, “has quite cancelled my gratitude, for the compliment contained in the first; I presume you do not always deem it expedient to administer an antidote against the poison of your flattery?”

“I never make use of the latter,” replied Atherton, “and of course have no occasion for the former.”

“You must possess a rare talent of pleasing the fairer sex, if you can dispense with so powerful an auxiliary,” said Calvert.

“I have never found it essential,” replied Atherton; “and I believe there are few females, worthy of our regard, who do not prefer the language of the heart.”

“You may call it the language of the heart,” said Calvert, “but it must pass through the lips, embellished by a few tropes and figures, drawn from the fountain of their charms, and kindled by the brilliancy of their eyes, or hang me if you ever reach their hearts, or receive one smile for your trouble.”

“If that is your *real* opinion,” returned Atherton, “your intercourse with them must have been very limited, or confined to the weak and vain,—”

“Which is no small proportion of the sex,” said Calvert, laughing; “but remember, Major, I am not gifted with the power of creating sweet sounds at will, and must therefore use my voice to the utmost advantage, in whatever it is capable of being exercised.”

“I am sure, Mr. Calvert,” said Peregrine White, “I have heard you sing psalm tunes like a deacon, many a time since you have been here, at meeting and elsewhere; though, to be sure, you have not the unrivalled *bass* voice of our friend Ashly.”

“My voice would be admirable,” said Calvert, “if I had taken as much pains to trill and modify it as some others have; but, as it is, I can fortunately get through your harmonious tunes very well, and your good—hem—Mr. Ashly what say you?”

“I think it our duty to sing psalms in the congregation,” said Benjamin Ashly, “albeit our voices are not attuned to harmony; we can, as the psalmist saith, ‘make melody in our hearts unto the Lord.’”

“I have ever been accustomed, Master Ashly,” said Calvert, gravely, “to chaunt the anthems of our excellent liturgy, as the service of our holy church requires.”

“That is but an abomination offered unto idols,” said Ashly, regarding Calvert, almost with horror; “and though, peradventure, I may offend, it must be that I lift up my voice against it.”

“Another time, if it please you, Mr. Ashly,” said Calvert, “or the enemy may take advantage of our controversy to steal some one of us, as he did your sheep. But, hark! the hounds are barking, and I’ll warrant have got scent of him.”

This sound was a signal for a general onset; and, in a moment, the whole party were on the alert to discover the track of the animal. Benjamin Ashly was the least forward in the chase; quite unaccustomed to such scenes, he seemed instinctively to shrink from the encounter, till Peregrine White, who observed him loitering behind, called out,—

“Move your legs faster, Mr. Ashly; if ever they were of use to you, they may be so now.”

“The Lord taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man,” replied Ashly; “but he directeth us whithersoever he will.”

“Such snail’s legs as yours, I should think were neither for use or pleasure,” returned Peregrine; “but have a care, Master Ashly, that your musket’s balls don’t fly out amongst us; and remember, if you stray into the wolf’s mouth, your texts of scripture won’t bring you out with a whole skin.”

So saying, he ran swiftly after his companions, followed more leisurely by Mr. Ashly, who had no mind to be left far in the rear. The wolf was by this time started from his covert, and pursued at full speed by dogs and sportsmen, though the numerous impediments of trees and underwood, prevented the latter from gaining upon the animal, which contrived to escape their fire and elude the fangs of his canine enemies by crouching in the lurking places of the forest, till again discovered, and compelled to have recourse to flight for safety.

In the heat of the pursuit, Major Atherton and Peregrine White, who chanced to be near together, were suddenly startled by a voice, as of some one in distress; and after listening a moment, they heard their own names distinctly repeated.

“It is Benjamin Ashly,” said Peregrine, “confound his slow motions; I have a mind not to wait for him.”

“”He must be in some difficulty,” returned Atherton; “we had better go to his relief.”

“He deserves it, for keeping back like a cowardly loon,” said Peregrine; “but come on this way,—only hear him, he is roaring like a wild bull of Bashan.

“Here he is,” cried Peregrine White, after he had retraced his steps for a short distance; and a loud burst of laughter succeeded the exclamation. Atherton quickened his pace to overtake Peregrine, who had outstripped him, and learn the cause of his merriment; nor could he refrain from joining in it, though less loudly, when he beheld the tall, stiff figure of Benjamin Ashly entangled in an Indian deer-trap, which springing as his feet became fastened in the noose, had lifted his heels high in the air, leaving his head scarcely resting on the earth. He was struggling lustily, and at the same time with dismay painted on his countenance, calling loudly for assistance, to liberate him from his unpleasant but ludicrous predicament.

“How is all this, Master Ashly?” said Peregrine, as soon as he could compose himself, “you have been *directed* with a witness to fall into this snare.”

“The wicked have spread their gins for me, and I have fallen into the net of the ungodly,” replied Ashly, with a truly woeful tone and expression.

“I think it was put here to entrap a more savoury animal,” returned Peregrine, “and in my mind they would not be well pleased to find you kicking about in the room of a good fat buck. But how did you contrive to get caught so neatly?”

“I took not heed to my ways,” said Ashly, “neither pondered the path of my feet, and the adversary hath taken me at will.”

“Good!” exclaimed Peregrine White, rubbing his hands, and retreating a few steps to examine him at all points; “I would Mr. Calvert and the others were here to help us to admire you. But is not your head dizzy, Master Ashly? If the wolf had chanced to come this way, he might have had a glorious pull at it.”

Benjamin Ashly seemed to shrink at the idea; but reddening with vexation, he said—

“Will you not help me out, Master Peregrine,—Major Atherton? It is written, ‘he that is glad at calamities, shall not go unpunished.’”

“All in good time,” said Peregrine, detaining Atherton, who was about to release him; “but we want to examine this cunning device a little longer—your legs do not ache, I hope?”

“Truly, Master Peregrine, my ‘legs are not of brass, nor my sinews of iron,’ that they should endure for ever; and verily they do weary of this bondage.”

At that instant a loud shout was heard from a distance, mingled with the report of fire-arms.

“There, they have killed the wolf,” exclaimed Peregrine, impatiently, “while we have been watching this game, that can be got at every day we choose.”

A brief silence however which ensued, was again broken by the howling of the savage beast, and Peregrine White bounded forward, exclaiming as he went: —

“We may be there in season, yet; and so good bye to you, Mr. Ashly.”

“Truly, the voice of the beast is like the rushing of mighty winds,” said Benjamin Ashly, casting his eyes fearfully around, and then almost in despair at his imprisoned feet, “I will go with you, if—“

“If you can be free,” interrupted Atherton, at the same time releasing him from bondage; “and perhaps we shall need your assistance in the contest, Mr. Ashly.”

Mr. Ashly, happy to be released, *righted* himself with all convenient speed, and having rubbed his feet and ancles with great care, moved briskly from the spot, often applying his hand to his head as he went along; probably to allay the uneasy sensation occasioned by the inverted position which had distended every vein, so that they appeared starting through his scanty crop of hair.

The trap which had so unluckily mistaken its prey was in itself a curious specimen of savage ingenuity. It was formed by a young sapling, bent to the ground like a bow, with acorns strewed under it, to decoy the deer; and so contrived with a noose attached to it, that when the nimble-footed animal came near enough to taste the food, his movements disengaged the fastenings, and the pliant tree suddenly springing up, held him entangled beyond the power of escape.

When Atherton had sufficiently admired this sample of Indian sagacity, he hastened after his companions; and, directed by their voices, found them arranged in a semicircle, awaiting the motions of the wolf, which they held at bay, though he had found refuge from their immediate attack within the shelter of a narrow cave.

“Where are your spoils, Mr. Calvert?” asked Atherton; “from the noise of your firing just now, I was fearful of coming too late to share the victory.”

“No! he is safe yet,” said Calvert, “and stands bullets as if dressed out in a coat of mail. But I understand,” he added, lowering his voice, “that you have been viewing a different sort of game; it must have been rare sport to see master Ashly rolling his clipped head on the ground.”

“Better sport to us than to him, I suspect,” said Atherton; “but where is the wolf? not slipped from you, I hope.”

“No, but almost as bad,” said Calvert; “we had got him fairly in the chase, and fired off our muskets, with deadly aim, as we thought; when, all at once, this confounded cave came in his way, and he retreated quietly into it.”

“Not very quietly, I think,” said Peregrine White, “for we heard his roaring afar off; but, at any rate, it was more convenient than a deer trap would have been: don’t you think so, Mr. Ashly?”

But Mr. Ashly was conveniently deaf at the moment; an infirmity which often seized him on like occasions, and which generally served to increase the mirth of Peregrine White. Every one was now engrossed by the common enemy, which had kept close in his retreat, till, impatient of the delay, some proposed firing into the narrow aperture, and others suggested expedients to draw him from it.

“Wait a little longer,” said Calvert, who was the most experienced sportsman in the group, “and I can answer for it he will put his nose out to look at us, when we will give him a pinch of gunpowder to smell of.”

And in fact, he had scarcely done speaking, when the animal, which was confined within narrow limits, and probably alarmed by the noise around him, came to the entrance of the cavern, and with a hideous growl, and eyes flashing like balls of fire, stood surveying them with fierce and determined courage. On a given signal every gun

was discharged; but at the first flash, he darted back into the cave, though not without receiving a severe wound; and mad with pain, he returned to the combat, and crouching low, prepared to spring upon his antagonists. At that instant, before the party had time to re-load, another piece was presented, and with surer aim; the ball pierced his breast, and prevented the meditated attack.

The wounded animal rolled in agony on the ground, which was already dyed with his blood; and then, as if exerting the last energies of despair, raised himself in a menacing attitude, and grinding his tusks with mingled rage and pain, he seemed making a final effort to revenge himself on his assailants. But a second and more effectual volley decided the conflict, and put a speedy end to the sufferings of the victim.

“We have done it now,” said Captain Standish, coming forward into the circle; “but the old veteran of the woods fought it out bravely to the last.”

“So it was you, Captain, who did us that good service just now,” said Peregrine White; “I thought it must be an experienced hand to take such deadly aim.”

“Yes, I have had long experience among the beasts of the forest, of every description,” returned the Captain; “these ugly wolves used to prowl round us without ceremony, and grin at our very feet, when we first came over; but we soon taught them better manners; and it is long since one has been so bold as this grim monster. Master Ashly’s barn-yard must have been very tempting, I think.”

“We have at least had good exercise on this cool morning,” said Atherton; “but, may I ask, Captain, how you came here so opportunely?”

“Hobamock told me what sport you were engaged in,” said the Captain, “and I had a mind to join you. But where is Master Ashly, Peregrine? I do not see him here.”

“I don’t know what has become of him,” said Peregrine; “I saw him just now behind that big tree, pointing his gun to the clouds, I think.”

“You speak that you do not know, Master Peregrine,” said Ashly, emerging from the shelter of some trees, “I levelled my gun fairly at the beast, and did but step behind that tree to save myself from the jaws of destruction, when the terrible creature glared upon me, and seemed to single me out for his prey.”

“Perhaps,” said Peregrine, gravely, “he mistook you for another calf.”

“Touching thy foolish talking, Master Peregrine,” returned Ashly, “it harms me not; neither thy jesting, which is not convenient.”

“Not convenient to you, perhaps,” replied Peregrine; “but, as we walk along, I will shew Captain Standish that cunning trap which caught you like a ‘ram in the thicket,’ just now.”

“What!” said the Captain, laughing, “Mr. Ashly caught in a deer-trap! I would I had been here sooner; methinks it must have been worth the looking at.”

“It is a pit into which we may all be left to slide,” said Benjamin Ashly; “and let him that ‘thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.’”

“And pray, Master Benjamin,” asked the Captain, “were you stooping to pick up acorns, or how came you into the snare?”

“No,” replied Peregrine; “it took him at the lower extremity, and lifted his legs up between heaven and earth, leaving his head resting on a soft pillow of chestnut burs. But look, Captain! here is the unlucky place, and the trap quite spoiled for further use.”

“I have often seen them,” said the Captain. “These savages are ingenious enough; but so improvident, that they are content to live on what they can find one day, and run

the risk of starving the next. Mr. Bradford got entangled in a trap like this, in one of our roving excursions to search the country, and was laughed at almost as much as you have been, Master Ashly; so you need not mind what this wild boy, Peregrine, says to you.”

“I regard it not,” returned Ashly; “it is as idle as the ‘crackling of thorns under a pot,’ and forgotten as soon as it entereth into my ears.”

“Perhaps it is lost while going in there,” said Peregrine; “they are stately portals to pass through:” and he glanced his mirthful eyes at Benjamin’s prominent ears.

“Come, come,” said the Captain, “we must quicken our pace, my lads, if we would reach home in season for dinner; I wish that were a fat deer instead of a carrion wolf we killed yonder, we might have a dainty feast from it.”

“If you keep on at this quick march, Captain,” said Peregrine White, “I, for one, shall hardly live to eat my dinner; I have been ranging about since sunrise, and begin to wax faint and weary. Good Master Ashly, we are commanded to ‘bear one another’s burthens,’ and I would you were inclined to obey, and relieve me of my musket for a season.”

“Let every man provide for himself, Master Peregrine,” replied Ashly, with unusual asperity; “and I exhort you to mind your own affairs, and leave me in peace.”

“You speak most wisely,” returned Peregrine; “but nevertheless, I must admonish you to take heed to your ways, and fall not into another deer-trap.”

Mr. Ashly deigned no further reply, and the party soon after left the woods, and dispersed to their different abodes. Captain Standish proposed calling a few moments at Mr. Grey’s, and both Atherton and Calvert readily consented to accompany him. But Major Atherton fancied himself received less cordially than usual by Mr. Grey, while Miriam, from whatever cause, evidently shunned his attentions, and with her usual gaiety conversed almost entirely with the Captain and Mr. Calvert. Rejoiced that the interview proved short, Atherton left the house depressed in spirits, and strongly inclined to accuse the father of injustice, and the daughter of caprice; and, for the first time, was heartily sorry that he had ever touched the shores of New-England.

## CHAP. IV.

Come, haste to the Wedding, ye friends and ye neighbours,  
The lovers their bliss can no longer delay;  
Suspend all your sorrows, your cares, and your labours,  
And let every heart beat with rapture to-day.

### NEW-ENGLAND SONG.

MAJOR ATHERTON for three succeeding days refrained from visiting Plymouth; a sacrifice of inclination which cost him no inconsiderable effort, though he endeavoured to conceal his uneasiness from the keen eyes of Captain Standish, and busied himself almost constantly in writing letters to his friends in England. Captain Martin, who was to be the bearer of them, and had just returned from a trading voyage to the Massachusetts Bay, expected shortly to sail from Plymouth, and Mr. Grey had taken passage in his vessel, being constrained to visit England on some business which required his personal attention. It was, however, with feelings of regret rather than pleasure, that he anticipated a return to his native land after an absence of so many years, during which he had become weaned from all the friendships of his youth, and bound by every tie of affection to his adopted country.

Mr. Grey had in early life formed an attachment for a young woman of respectable family, and whose personal attractions, though great, were surpassed by the purity and excellence of her mind and character. But her friends, who had at first sanctioned his addresses, withdrew their approbation, when in subsequent years he became a convert to the opinions of the Brownists, and exerted his utmost influence to induce her to embrace the same tenets. Yet, though these tenets were at that time too obnoxious to harmonize with her feelings, his change of faith did not remove the deep-rooted affection she cherished for him; and persisting in her resolution to become the wife of no other man, her father at length yielded a reluctant consent to their union. But his prejudice against the religion of Mr. Grey was insuperable, and from that time his tenderness for her seemed to diminish; and as the arguments of the husband proved more persuasive than those of the lover, and the spirit of persecution had already commenced its reign.

Mrs. Grey was induced to join the Puritans, who fled for safety to Holland, and united with a church at Leyden. Mrs. Grey, however, after their removal to America, had the satisfaction of receiving many affectionate letters from her father, whose displeasure at her marriage was gradually softened by time, and the intercession of his eldest daughter, who discreetly pleaded the cause of her absent sister, to whom she was devotedly attached. On the death of Mrs. Grey, this attachment was transferred to Miriam, whom she loved for her mother's sake, and wished to adopt as her own child; but the objections of Mr. Grey were invincible, and too reasonable to be disputed. Still, Miriam was constantly receiving from her aunt, tokens of kindness and remembrance; and though her father sometimes thought them too costly or too gay, yet if any feeling of worldly pride ever entered his breast, it was when he saw the native charms of his daughter enhanced by a becoming dress, suited to her age and station; and her own sense

of propriety, as well as his peculiar notions of duty, rejected whatever was superfluous. On the death of his father-in-law, Mr. Grey became trustee of the property which Miriam received from him, in her mother's right; and it was somewhat relative to the settlement of it, which obliged him to encounter the fatigues of a voyage to England.

Major Atherton, in the mean time, became weary of his voluntary exile from Plymouth; and, on the fourth day, after revolving the subject in his mind, had just persuaded himself that it was indispensable to pay his parting respects to Mr. Grey, when his meditations were suddenly put to flight by the entrance of Mr. Calvert, who saluted him with his usual freedom, and even more than his usual cordiality.

"I have come all this way, Major, to learn what has become of you," he said. "I have not encountered you by a certain gate for four days past, and I thought that nothing short of drowning or shooting yourself could keep you so long away."

"It is not the first time I have remained here even longer," replied Atherton; "mine host is a most agreeable companion, and Alexander is at all times ready to hunt or fish with me."

"Are there any bright eyes to hunt after, here?" asked Calvert. "If there are, I pray you let me join in the chase; for it is tiresome to gaze for ever on one face, be it ever so beautiful."

"I have seen none peeping from wood or brake, nor yet sporting on the glassy waves," said Atherton; "Dryads and Naiads, I suspect, are all frightened from this rugged clime, by these cold autumnal blasts."

"You have grown enamoured of solitude then? That is a bad sign," said Calvert; "but if you would turn recluse, Major, I pray thee go for the whole; my bead-telling kinsman of Maryland will give thee good thanks to establish a monastery of holy friars in his fair province."

"Ah! Mr. Calvert," said the Captain, who had just entered, "nobody but you would dare to speak openly of such papistical things in this region of the world; but tell me whence you come, and whither you are going? Sit down first, though, if it please you."

"It would please me to sit a long time," replied Calvert; "but I can stay only one moment. I shot across the Bay in a high wind and a light skiff, and came to tell you Mr. Grey hopes to see you all to-morrow. The banns are published—the priest is ready, and demure Mistress Lois is waiting to become a bride. I promised to deliver the tidings to you, so witness all, that I have done it—and now, good bye to you."

"Soft and easy, good sir," said the Captain. "You have but half done your duty, if you wait not for an answer to your message; mine is plain yes, and a merry wedding to them; and, though cousin Atherton seems to be deliberating, I think I may vouch for his attendance also. Am I right, Edward?"

"Certainly, sir," said Atherton; "I have no excuse to offer if I were disposed to decline."

"Perhaps we can frame one for you if you are very reluctant to go," said Calvert.

"So far from it," returned Atherton, "I would not on any account forego the expected pleasure."

"I should think it strange if you would," replied Calvert, "when there are so many attractions to allure you there."

“We all know your opinion on that subject, Mr. Calvert,” said the Captain; “but methinks a tongue so eloquent as thine should have won your cause ere this.”

“I am proof against flattery in all its forms, Captain; so do not try to excite my vanity.”

“Never fear,” said the Captain; “there have been enough before me to do that, and with good success I should judge; so I will deal to you a simple truth: the boldest wooer is not always successful.”

“Thank you, sir,” returned Calvert; “but lest you should depress my courage too much, I will be off for Plymouth again.”

“Bear my best wishes to my little rosebud,” said the Captain; “and bid her take counsel from her cousin Lois on this occasion.”

“With all my heart,” returned Calvert; “and so once more, fare thee well.”

“Calvert is a clever fellow,” said the Captain, when he was gone; “but I hope the girl will not be foolish enough to marry him.”

“And why do you hope so, sir?”

“Because she is the pride of New-England,” said the Captain, “and I would not have her transplanted to the tobacco fields and rice plantations of Virginia; besides——”

The Captain suddenly stopped, and looking through the window seemed watching the motions of Calvert, who had again entered the boat and was pushing from the shore. After a moment’s silence he turned quickly to Atherton, and looking steadily in his face enquired,—

“And what do *you* think of Miriam Grey, Edward Atherton?”

“Think of her?” said Atherton, startled by the abruptness of the question. “she is as beautiful and lovely as an angel; and I think her a jewel worthy the diadem of a prince.”

“Pretty high flown, on my word,” said the Captain laughing. “I don’t think I could have done better myself, even at your age, Major; and so I suppose if she were not a Puritan you might be inclined to take her ‘for better for worse,’ as your crafty prayer-book hath it.”

“Really, sir,” replied Atherton, “to be frank with you, that would be a very slight objection in my mind.”

“That is right, Edward,” returned the Captain. “I love a candid, liberal spirit; but let me tell you, they are not often to be met with; and if you would take this jewel to yourself, you must believe with the rulers of the land.”

“I would not,” said Atherton, “for any personal advantage or gratification sacrifice my religious opinions till convinced they are incorrect; and at present I am far from being so.”

“You are right again, cousin,” replied the Captain; “yet after all it is but rejecting a few idle ceremonies, which have no authority in scripture; and we all believe alike at the bottom.”

“We all believe the Bible,” returned Atherton, “or profess to believe; but there are different ways of interpreting it; and our church considers certain articles and forms essential, which you denounce as idolatrous.”

“Well,” said the Captain, “you must get our minister or elders to discuss these points with you; or Mr. Bradford, who is as knowing as any of them on such subjects, and

can bring forward arguments like a Bishop. He even learned the Hebrew tongue, purposely, as he says, that he might read with his 'own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native beauty.'”

“I am afraid it would be dangerous to encounter so skilful an antagonist,” said Atherton, smiling; “for I already admire the simplicity of your worship more, perhaps, than most of my English friends would approve.”

“So much the better,” replied the Captain, “and we will leave you to time and opportunity, hoping they will bring you into the right way at last; and then, Major, some other plans can be settled at leisure.”

“I have a plan in my head now which I would mention to you, Captain; for I believe it is nearly time to put it in execution.”

“Well, speak it out, cousin Atherton; but I hope it will not take you away from us.”

“Only for a season, to the Massachusetts. I have a strong inclination to see that place, which rumour seems so fond of magnifying, and propose to visit it shortly if a convenient opportunity should offer.”

“Not at this season of the year!” said the Captain, “You can see nothing but the frozen ground and leafless trees; but wait till spring and I will go with you.”

“That is certainly a very tempting proposal, Captain; but I may then feel compelled to make a longer voyage, even to the green shores of England.”

“Any other spring will do as well, and better than the next for that voyage,” said the Captain; “so I pray you give up your scheme for the present.”

“I will take it into consideration, and give you seasonable notice of my departure,” returned Atherton. “But I must leave you now, Captain, to prepare my packet for Captain Martin.”

“Well, have all things in readiness for to-morrow,” said the Captain, “remember I am a punctual man, and it would not be handsome to keep the good people waiting on such a joyful occasion.”

But it was not necessary to remind Major Atherton of his duty in that particular; he was equipped in excellent season on the following day, and waiting with some impatience for the appointed hour. This was as early as could reasonably be expected, even in an age, when it was the fashion to visit in the afternoon, and return with the setting sun, instead of trespassing as now, upon the hours of night, and prolonging the dance and revel till the dawning of the morn. Captain Standish, who exercised a sort of military precision, even in the minute affairs of life, was extremely punctilious in regard to time on so important an occasion; but his calculations were defeated by the perversity of the wind, which died into a calm as they were crossing the Bay, and their progress was so retarded by the unlucky accident, that the company were all assembled, and waiting at Mr. Grey's when they arrived at his house.

The room was well filled with guests, among whom Atherton recognized the Governor and his family, and many others who were slightly known to him; but Miriam Grey engrossed his whole attention, and her cordial smiles quickly effaced the remembrance of her late fancied indifference. She, however, soon left the room, and the slight bustle which had prevailed, was succeeded by a general pause;—the men looked grave, and even the goodly row of matrons and maidens was hushed to silence as if awaiting some important event. Every eye was turned expectantly towards the door; and

in a few moments Miriam Grey re-entered, accompanied by the bride and bridegroom, who advanced to seats left vacant for them, at the upper end of the apartment, where the clergyman and magistrate stood ready to officiate. Lois Grey sustained the gaze of observation with modest firmness: she wore the simple, but not unbecoming, garb of her sect, with no adornment except the native charms of an intelligent and ingenuous countenance; and throughout acquitted herself with a degree of propriety and composure, which could only result from deliberate reflection on the step she was about to take, and a perfect confidence in the man to whose keeping she had entrusted her earthly happiness.

Among many of the early non-conformists, and particularly throughout the Massachusetts' settlements, marriage was regarded merely as a civil contract; and accordingly, the ceremony was always performed by a magistrate instead of a minister of religion. As Mr. Weldon had imbibed that opinion, the Governor was requested to conduct the marriage service, though in compliment to Mr. Reynel, the clergyman who was present, he was invited to make the concluding prayer and offer some advice adapted to the occasion.

The short, but deeply interesting ceremony was soon concluded; and the whole company successively approached the new-married pair to present their compliments and congratulations. The long established custom of saluting and being saluted was not forgotten. Mr. Winslow, in virtue of his office, set the example by touching his lips to the blushing cheek of the bride, while Mrs. Winslow received the salutation of the bridegroom. They were followed by the elder part of the company in due order, each leading forward his spouse; and finally the young people succeeded them in high glee, and bandying jokes, which were doubtless considered excellent at the time; but are now, unfortunately for posterity, entirely forgotten.

Peregrine White, not quite satisfied with kissing the bride alone, seemed strongly inclined to extend the practice more generally; and was so far encouraged by a nod of approbation from Captain Standish, that he turned suddenly to Mistress Rebecca Spindle, who chanced to be next him, and before she was aware of his intention, startled her by a hearty salute.

“La! Master Peregrine,” exclaimed the spinster, “you always take one so at unawares!”

But Peregrine had already fixed his eyes on the rosy cheek of a laughing girl; though before he could approach her, or his companions had found courage to imitate his boldness, the amusement was interdicted by a grave elderly man, who, with an air of authority not to be disputed, remarked, that “the custom of indiscriminate salutations between young men and maidens, ought not to be tolerated in a Christian assembly, since it was no where authorized in scripture, except where the apostle commanded the brethren to ‘greet one another with a holy kiss,’ which could not be interpreted to sanction a frolic introduced like the present by a giddy youth.”

This appeal was considered unanswerable by a majority of the guests; but Peregrine White whispered apart to Atherton—

“I think that long exhortation might have been spared, when we have met together on purpose to make merry; but I wish I had begun with some one more tempting than Mistress Spindle: I would, had I known my sport was to be ended so speedily.”

But the low murmurs of his discontent were happily interrupted by the distribution of cake and wine—from time immemorial, as indispensable at a wedding

festival as the nuptial benediction. The health and happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Weldon were cheerfully pledged by each individual; some adding to the compliment a sententious remark, or a word of advice adapted to their new situation; while those to whom it was addressed, agreeably to the usage of the times, maintained their station by each other as immoveably, as if the words which pronounced them man and wife had actually made them one person.

Miriam Grey retained a seat by the side of Lois, occasionally mingling with the guests as civility required; and Major Atherton, whose eyes continually followed her, fancied her countenance was less animated, and her smile more pensive than usual. It was natural that she should feel a degree of sadness on an event so replete with solemn interest to her cousin, and which, she was aware, would soon remove from her the long tried and beloved friend of her childhood and youth. Miriam, however, endeavoured to repress these feelings; and Mr. Calvert, who perhaps also observed the shade on her open brow, exerted his peculiar address to engage her in conversation, and call forth the usual gaiety of her spirits.

"I hope, cousin Atherton," said Captain Standish, who saw him regarding them attentively, "you do not envy the bridegroom, that you look so long and earnestly in that direction."

"Not in the least, sir," said Atherton, "though he appears so happy that one might almost be tempted to do so; but I was not even thinking of him just then."

"No, I'll engage you were not," said Peregrine White; "and I think, Captain, if the Major was envying any one, it must have been Mr. Calvert."

"You take it upon yourself to think at all times, and for every body, Master Malapert," said the Captain; "but what were *you* thinking of when you ventured to offend Mistress Spindle by kissing her?"

"I was thinking of a fairer cheek beyond her," replied Peregrine, laughing; "but thought it would not be courteous to pass by hers; and I believe she has very graciously pardoned the offence."

"Fairly done," said the Captain, "and I think no one will contest your choice, Peregrine. But come with me, Major Atherton; we will draw nearer the happy couple, since they are tied up so that they cannot come to us."

"I will follow, with your leave," said Peregrine. "Miriam looks this way as though she had something to say to me; or, it may be, to you, Major Atherton."

"I have been half inclined to forbid your banns, Mr. Weldon," said the Captain, as he drew near him. "Methinks it is hardly lawful in you to leave your distant province of Connecticut, and steal away a fair daughter from our land."

"The theft was committed with the consent of all parties concerned," returned Mr. Weldon; "and it is now too late to enter a protest against our proceedings."

"Yes, you are pretty sure of your prize now," replied the Captain; "but I am glad to hear you intend to remain at Plymouth for this winter, were it only for the sake of Miriam, who could hardly do without her cousin at this time."

"I should be unwilling to expose her to the privations and hardships of a new colony in the wilderness at this season of the year," replied Mr. Weldon; "but, if we are preserved until the spring, I think we may venture there with a fair prospect of success and happiness; and our cousin Miriam has promised to be quite reconciled to her removal then."

“As much as I *can* be, you mean,” said Miriam, “and on condition that you wait until my father returns.”

“Perhaps we may yet induce you to go with us,” said Lois. “Will you not assist us to persuade her, Captain Standish?”

“Not I,” replied the Captain. “It is quite enough to lose *you*, and we will not suffer Miriam to go, even for a short time.”

“Not to such a place,” said Calvert, “where the trees are yet scarcely felled, or the ground prepared to bring forth food for the scanty inhabitants. She might as well think of a voyage to the North Pole.”

“I suppose *you* would rather recommend the balmy breezes of the south, Mr. Calvert,” said the Captain.

“Yes,” returned Calvert, fixing his eyes on Miriam, “there is some enjoyment in life, where the earth is ever verdant, the flowers in almost perpetual bloom, and the trees laden with delicious fruits.”

“I should think one would grow weary from very sameness,” said Miriam; “and really my own climate of New-England seems far pleasanter to me, even with its snow storms and bleak winds, which but render the return of spring more grateful.”

“That is exactly what you ought to say and think, my little rose-bud,” said the Captain. “I have seen many countries, but no one fairer than this, or more desirable; so do not let Mr. Calvert persuade you there is any thing better to be found under the hot sun of Virginia.”

“There is no danger of it, sir,” replied Miriam; “I am very incredulous on this subject, and cannot readily believe any land happier or more beautiful than the one I have lived in, almost from my birth.”

“Not even Old England?” asked Peregrine White, archly. “Major Atherton can tell you wonderful stories about that, Miriam; and some which may change your mind, perhaps.”

“Not in the least,” replied Miriam, smiling, but deeply blushing; “it is our mother country, and I have always been taught to love it, but—”

“Keep in your own colony,” interrupted the Captain; “this exploring of the wilderness is a seeking out of new inventions, which does not suit me, so long as we have room enough and to spare about us.”

“You did not think so, Captain,” said Lois, “seventeen years ago, when you used to toss Miriam in your arms, and run after me round the deck of the *Mayflower*, in our passage over from Holland.”

“I was seventeen years younger then,” replied the Captain, “and you a romping child, instead of a grave matron, Mrs. Weldon; and we came for the rights of conscience, which you cannot plead in excuse for removing farther off. But your husband may be right for all that, Lois; it is well to provide ample space for a family; and, at any rate, you cannot mend the matter now.”

“I hope she will never have cause to wish it,” said Mr. Weldon.

“I hope not,” returned the Captain; “but repentance will sometimes creep in after marriage; it is a short ceremony, but apt to bring a long reckoning.”

“Yes,” said Calvert, “you have invented a very summary way of joining people together; and it seems to me quite an improvement on the ancient mode of our church;

one is saved a vast deal of time, to say nothing of the formidable array of book, ring, and kneeling.”

“I am glad to hear you condemn such superfluities,” said Mr. Grey, “which savour much of the worldly spirit of vain glory. I hope, Major Atherton, that you have judged as favourably of our forms?”

“I see nothing to condemn in the form,” returned Atherton; “but I must confess myself still prejudiced in favour of that which I have been accustomed to witness; and cannot but consider it more solemn and impressive.”

“Is there any thing more binding,” asked Mr. Grey, “in the giving and receiving a ring, or in kneeling, rather than standing?”

“No,” returned Atherton; “nor is the simple act of joining the hands, which we all allow, in itself binding; yet custom has equally sanctioned them with us, and it is not easy to divest one’s-self of its influence.”

“Even as the children of Canaan clave unto their graven images, so do the sons of prelacy put their trust in the vain pomps and ceremonies of their religion,” said the elderly man who had reproved Peregrine White, and now lent an attentive ear to the conversation.

“I hope, sir, you will absolve us from wilful idolatry,” returned Atherton; “we follow the path which our fathers pointed out, as most congenial to the spirit of the gospel, and the practice of its early followers.”

“It is blindly building an altar to the ‘unknown God,’” replied the other, “and seeking to please him with offerings and oblations, in which he hath no pleasure.”

“I do not feel myself very bigoted to forms,” replied Atherton, “but some are undoubtedly expedient; and long experience has proved the efficacy of those which we have adopted.”

“The wedding ring, for instance,” said Calvert, “I should hope some of our forms were more happy in their effects, than that sometimes proves to be.”

“Major Atherton knows nothing of that yet,” said Captain Standish, who had listened with evident impatience to his kinsman’s defence of such obnoxious ceremonies; “and I will be bound for him, if he can get a wife to his liking, he will not stand upon rings, or kneeling, or any such troublesome inventions of priestcraft.”

“Now who would think,” said Mistress Rebecca Spindle, “of using a ring and a book to be married with, unless it were a papist, or some such like.”

“And yet it is better than not to be married at all,” replied Peregrine White; “don’t you think so, Mistress Rebecca?”

“Heaven forbid, that I should uphold such idolatrous practices,” ejaculated the spinster.

“But tell us now, Mistress Spindle,” returned Peregrine, “when are we to drink your health at your own wedding?”

“It must be all in the Lord’s own good time,” replied Rebecca, in a tone of resignation.

“But you doubtless pray that the time may be shortened,” said Peregrine, gravely.

“Be it sooner or later, matters little for me to know,” returned the other, “our times are not in our own hands.”

“I think it cannot be much later,” replied Peregrine, “what say you, Miriam?”

“Mistress Rebecca can best judge of that matter herself,” said Miriam, “unless you may feel inclined to decide it for her.”

“I had rather undertake to do it for you,” answered Peregrine; “and I believe there would be more than one ready to assist me.”

“No doubt of that,” said the Captain; “but I tell you, Master Peregrine, Miriam does not need any of your interference; she is well able to take care of her own affairs.”

“Thank you, Captain,” said Miriam; “I must crave your assistance oftener to drill Master Peregrine into good behaviour; he is very apt to rebel against me.”

“It would be a good piece of service to us all if I could do so,” replied the Captain; “but I would sooner undertake to discipline a whole regiment of recruits.”

“I will remove myself before you begin,” said Peregrine. “This seems a second part of the good man’s discourse who lectured me about kissing just now; and I will make room for Master Ashly, who is coming this way, to hear the conclusion.”

“Farewell,” said Miriam. “I hope the exhortation has proved a ‘word in season to you.’”

“We will prove that by and bye,” returned Peregrine, “when I can get nearer to your lips, Miriam. Yonder is the Governor and all the grave personages of the land preparing to depart, and peace go with them! You and I, Mistress Rebecca, with the rest of the young people, will stay behind, and throw the stocking.”

The guests at that moment began to separate; and the elderly and married ones, after shaking hands with the bride and bridegroom, and repeating their good wishes, returned home, leaving the younger part of the company to pursue the amusements peculiar to the occasion, and indulge the mirth and gaiety which it inspired.

## CHAP. V.

Oh why should Fate sic pleasure have,  
Life's dearest bands entwining?  
Or why see sweet a flower as Love,  
Depend on Fortune's shining?                      BURNS.

MAJOR ATHERTON was among the last who quitted Mr. Grey's, and as the evening was rather advanced, he was readily induced to return with Peregrine White, and pass the night at the Governor's. A strong north-west wind on the following morning proved favourable for the departure of Captain Martin's vessel, and, soon after breakfast, Mr. Winslow proposed calling to take leave of Mr. Grey, in the expectation that he was about to sail. Atherton readily acceded to the proposal, and, unwilling to intrude on his domestic privacy at the moment of separation from his family, they proceeded directly to the vessel, intending to await his arrival there. They found him already on board; for Captain Martin, who had been long detained by adverse winds, and found the winter approaching, held every thing in readiness to take advantage of the first favourable breeze, and was then preparing to weigh anchor, and depart.

Mr. Grey was standing on the forecastle of the ship, with his eyes fixed on the shore, where his own house was just visible in the distance, and so engaged in meditation, that he did not perceive the approach of the Governor and Major Atherton till they stood directly before him.

"The Captain has been expeditious in making his arrangements," said Mr. Winslow; "I hoped for a longer conference with you before your departure."

"Our farewell must be brief," returned Mr. Grey; "I perceive they are already waiting for us; but it is well, perhaps, that we have no longer time, for I feel that the moment of separation is too bitter to be prolonged."

"They whom you leave behind," said the Governor, "are safe, I trust, in the protection of Heaven, and surrounded by friends who will watch over their safety, and minister to their comfort and welfare."

"That thought has power to console me," replied Mr. Grey. "While I cheerfully entrust my child to the guardian care of Him who is better than any earthly parent, I feel persuaded also that I may confide in your friendship, should any unexpected misfortune arise to perplex or distress her."

"Suffer no anxious thought for her to disturb your mind," returned Mr. Winslow; "she shall be unto me as mine own daughter, and to my wife she is no less dear."

"May God bless you, my friend," said Mr. Grey, with emotion; "and now, farewell! Cease not to make mention of me in your prayers."

"Farewell!" repeated Mr. Winslow; "and may he who commands the winds and stills the roaring of the waves, guide and protect you in all your ways, and return you in safety to us again."

"Amen!" said Mr. Grey, with solemn emphasis, as he slowly released his hand from the Governor and offered it to Major Atherton, who had remained a silent but deeply interested auditor, and scarcely able to repress the impulse which urged him to confess his attachment for Miriam, and entreat permission of her father to become

himself her protector and husband. But the recollection of their late interview, with a conviction that it would now be useless, and might increase his anxiety respecting her, dissuaded him from the attempt, while, in some embarrassment, he waited for Mr. Grey to address him.

“Major Atherton,” he at length said, “I may meet with your friends or kindred whither I am going, and if I can do you aught of service with them, command me, and I will do it cheerfully, for you have shewn much kindness unto me and mine.”

“I have left few there to feel interested for my fate,” replied Atherton, “and to them I have already written; but there are some valued friends of my mother whom you may chance to meet, and if they inquire concerning me, say to them that I am happy and contented.”

“And shall I tell them,” asked Mr. Grey, “that you will sojourn yet a long time in this land?”

“I am still undecided,” replied Atherton; “it may be but a few months, and possibly for many years.”

“Commit your ways to Him who ordereth all things for the best,” returned Mr. Grey; “and, if I meet you here on my return, Major Atherton, may it be in peace, and with the same sentiments of regard and confidence with which I now part from you.”

“I trust you will find no cause to withdraw your confidence and regard from me, sir,” replied Atherton; and the firmness of his voice, and the calmness with which he restrained the searching glance of Mr. Grey, seemed to reassure the latter, who shook him cordially by the hand; and having exchanged their parting adieus, the Governor and Atherton returned to the shore.

Major Atherton soon after separated from Mr. Winslow, and ascending a slight eminence which commanded a view of the noble Bay of Plymouth, he watched with extreme interest the progress of the vessel, as with swelling sails she rode proudly over the waves. It was nearly three months since the same bark had brought him from the land to which she was now returning, like a white winged messenger; and, “why,” he asked himself, “am I exiled from the country which gave me birth? why do I still linger on these shores, an unknown individual, in a clime which yet scarcely bears a name on the map of civilization?” he started as these reflections crossed his mind, and looked more eagerly upon the receding ship, as if desirous that it should waft him back to the home he had forsaken. But it was already far off in the distance; the busy hum of the sailors, the commanding voice of the captain, were borne away on the winds; and Atherton repeated with a sigh, “Why should I revisit the scenes of my boyhood and my youth? where there is no loved voice to welcome me, where all whom I held most dear have been prematurely snatched from my embrace, and where my ambitious hopes of honour and distinction have been blighted in the bud! Here there is at least *one* being to attach me, and here I will remain, until her lips decide my destiny.”

With this resolution Major Atherton walked quickly onwards, till he found himself by the well-known wicket, which led to the house of Mr. Grey. He looked earnestly at the windows, but no person was visible; and fearful that a visit from him at that time would be unwelcome, he was passing by with reluctant steps, when the door opened and closed again with some violence, and looking round he saw Mr. Calvert coming from it, and advancing towards him.

“Upon my word, Major Atherton,” he said, “you haunt this spot like the ghost of a despairing lover; at morning, noon, and night, I find you hovering round it—”

“Which proves your frequent visits also,” replied Atherton; “and are they made in the same unhappy spirit which you attribute to me?”

“Entirely the reverse,” said Calvert; “besides, I am not always creeping around the borders, but enter boldly into the bower of my pretty nymph.”

“I should not take the freedom to enter at a season like the present,” said Atherton, “when she can scarcely feel in spirits to receive the visit even of a friend.”

“Your scruples are certainly very delicate,” said Calvert, sarcastically; “but my acquaintance, you will remember, is of longer standing, which entitles me to greater freedom.”

“And you are not very fastidious about trifles, I think,” returned Atherton; “but, may I ask how you found the family within?”

“If you mean Mr. Weldon and old Jemima, the house-maid, they seemed as well as usual.”

“Were your efforts at consolation directed entirely to them?” asked Atherton.

“To tell you the truth, I saw no others to exercise it upon, unless it were Miriam’s kitten,” said Calvert, pettishly.

“You did not see Miriam Grey, then?” returned Atherton; and he could not suppress a smile of pleasure.

“You need not look so much pleased about it,” replied Calvert. “I am sure it is no strange thing for girls to shew off their importance by such capricious airs; and Lois would doubtless like to display her authority now she has become a matron.”

“Did Mrs. Weldon prohibit Miriam from appearing?” inquired Atherton.

“Very likely,” said Calvert; “but I did not see her either, they were wailing together in some dark corner, for aught I know; but you had better go in, Major, perhaps you will be more successful.”

“Excuse me,” replied Atherton; “I am not fond of making experiments, and it would be particularly rash when you have so recently failed.”

“You are too cautious to be a dangerous rival,” said Calvert; “so I forgive your joy at my defeat just now, which really does not cause me the least inquietude. Women are fickle beings at the best, and may well be allowed their whims before marriage, since no man of sense will indulge them afterwards; and so, good morning to you.”

Major Atherton returned home, in unusually good spirits, which led Captain Standish to remark, “that the wedding had produced a wholesome effect on him; and that he hoped to congratulate him on his own before long.”

Atherton was not displeased at the wish, nor at a succeeding proposition, that they should, the following day, pay their respects to Mrs. Weldon, and see how Miriam fared in her father’s absence.

The visit was accordingly made, and they found Miriam more cheerful than they expected, and almost reconciled to the separation. Atherton spoke of her father, and mentioned that he had seen him at the moment of his departure; a circumstance which seemed to give him additional interest with her; and she asked numberless questions respecting him that he was never weary of answering. An hour or two passed by; and when the Captain spoke of their return, Atherton thought them the shortest and most

delightful he had ever spent; nor was it without evident reluctance that he rose to accompany him.

Another week glided away, almost the happiest of Major Atherton's life; for some portion of every day he passed in the society of Miriam, and his approach was welcomed by her with a brighter smile and deeper glow than usually adorned her countenance. These expressions of pleasure, of which, with an artlessness that rendered them more attractive, she seemed perfectly unconscious, Atherton could not fail to regard as indications that he had awakened some interest in her affections; and with the sanguine hopes which time had not yet taught him to distrust, he indulged the most flattering dreams, forgetful of her father's interdiction, and of every obstacle which could oppose his wishes. Frank and undisguised in his disposition, Captain Standish easily penetrated his views and feelings; but he made no comment on them; and only occasionally hazarded a jest on his frequent visits to Miriam Grey. In these visits he was sometimes his companion, and readily detected, through the delicate reserve, perhaps consciousness, which led Miriam to direct her attentions and conversation less freely to Atherton than any other; an incipient preference, which, thus disguised, might have escaped an unobservant eye.

To the mind of Mrs. Weldon, the situation of her cousin occasioned many anxious and perplexing thoughts. Too solicitous for her happiness not to remark the attachment which appeared to be daily strengthening between Miriam and Major Atherton, she yet felt unable to avert it, or to interrupt their intercourse, which she knew must meet the disapprobation of her father, and probably terminate in disappointment to them both. Mr. Grey had ever placed unbounded confidence in the discretion of his niece, and in the dutiful affection of his daughter; and Lois felt a degree of responsibility during his absence which increased her uneasiness, and determined her to remind Miriam of her duty, and the submission which she owed to the wishes of her father.

One day, when Major Atherton had not been with them as usual, and Miriam discovered many symptoms of disappointment, Mrs. Weldon, after observing her for some time in silence, at length said,—

“You are unusually grave to-day, Miriam; has any thing happened to give you uneasiness?”

“No, nothing, Lois,” said Miriam; “but I believe the dulness of the weather affects my spirits.”— And she arose from her chair, and crossing the room, seated herself by a window.

“You did not use to regard such trifles, Miriam, but were as cheerful in storms as in sunshine.”

“Yes, when my father was at home; but I cannot now avoid many anxious thoughts respecting him.”

“And were you less anxious for him two days since, when it stormed so violently?” asked Lois.

“No, but Mr. Calvert was here then, and one cannot but be gay where he is; besides, he assured me that the vessel was beyond the reach of our storms.”

“And Major Atherton was here too,” said Lois; “did you forget to mention him?”

Miriam made no reply, but looked steadfastly upon the leafless branches of the trees, which rustled against the casement.

“I did not think, Miriam,” continued Lois, “that Mr. Calvert would render you so entirely forgetful of Major Atherton.”

“You cannot believe, Lois,” said Miriam, turning to her with vivacity, “that I do for a moment prefer Mr. Calvert, or even place him in comparison with—”

She stopped abruptly, abashed by a smile which lurked on the countenance of Lois.

“No, dear Miriam!” said Mrs. Weldon, after a moment’s pause, “I only fear that you think *too* highly of Major Atherton, and *too* frequently.”

“And why should you fear that, Lois? how often have I heard you speak warmly in his praise; and surely he has done nothing to forfeit your regard.”

“Nothing, Miriam; I believe him deserving of the high opinion which we all entertain of him.”

“Why then should we withdraw it, Lois?—I, at least, who am indebted to him for my recovered life, should be ungrateful to repay his kindness with cold indifference.”

“I would not have you ungrateful, or indifferent, Miriam; but guard your feelings lest they betray you into warmer sentiments than are consistent with your duty and happiness.”

“Surely, dear Lois!” said Miriam, with alarm, “I have betrayed no undue partiality—nothing which can be deemed improper or unbecoming!”

“I spoke of the future, not the past, Miriam. I would awaken your prudence, not alarm your delicacy. Your own discretion can alone direct you. Major Atherton seeks not to disguise his affection for you; and he hopes to obtain your’s in return.”

“It cannot, must not be so;” replied Miriam, deeply blushing; “and believe me, Lois, the wishes of my father shall not be disregarded.”

“Let them ever continue sacred to you!” returned Lois; “remember your voluntary promise to consult his will, and it may save you many unhappy moments, many painful reflections. And now tell me, Miriam, that you forgive my interference?”

“I thank you for it, dear Lois!” said Miriam; “and I believe you were in this, as in every other thing, actuated by kindness to *me*. But I think,” she added, more gaily, “you have not exacted impossibilities from me.”

Mrs. Weldon looked a moment in silence at her cousin’s varying complexion; and then kissing her affectionately, left her to the indulgence of her own reflexions.

Miriam stood at the window with her eyes fixed on the passing clouds, till unconsciously they became filled with tears, which gathered in large drops, and rolled unheeded down her cheeks. But she was soon roused from this situation by the appearance of Major Atherton, who hastily flung open the wicket, and with quick foot-steps approached the door. Miriam finding it impossible to retire without observation, endeavoured to wipe away the traces of her emotion, and receive him with her usual cheerfulness. For the first time, however, her manner was constrained and embarrassed; and the animation of Atherton vanished when he perceived the dejection which her efforts were unable to disguise.

“Dear Miriam, why are you so sad?” he asked, in a voice of anxious tenderness, and thrown off his guard by an appearance of melancholy so unusual to her.

“I have been watching these watery clouds,” she replied, averting her face from him, “till they have imparted their gloomy influence to me. The angry tossing of the waves too, as they dash against the rocks, remind me of the terrors and perils of the sea.”

“Nay then,” said Atherton, “I must not allow you to look on objects which fill your imagination with such sombre images,” and he gently led her towards the fire, and seated himself beside her.

“But I can still hear the rushing of the wind,” said Miriam, smiling, “and the sound is scarcely less appalling to me.”

“Its influence cannot extend beyond the coast,” returned Atherton; “and I trust your father is now far distant, beneath a clearer sky, and borne on by favourable gales.”

“But where all is uncertain,” replied Miriam, “it is impossible to exclude doubt and anxiety from the mind.”

“How happy should I be,” said Atherton, fervently, “could I ever hope to be regarded with so much interest.”

“And do you feel so very destitute of friends,” asked Miriam, reproachfully, “as to believe there are none here who would feel solicitude for your welfare and happiness?”

“I trust there are many, and those whose esteem I highly prize,” returned Atherton; “but the favour of the whole world were vain and joyless to me, Miriam, unless blessed with the love which I so ardently aspire to gain.”

Miriam drooped her eyes beneath his impassioned gaze; but, determined to conceal the emotions which really agitated her, she resumed an air of unconcern, and, with apparent gaiety, replied—

“And, like Haman of old, every blessing is valueless in your eyes, so long as one desire is withholden from you! But remember, his fate is recorded for our learning, on whom the ends of the earth have come!”

Atherton looked at her in surprise and perplexity, as if seeking an explanation of a levity so sudden and ill-timed; but, deceived by her transient self-possession, and deeply wounded by her supposed indifference, he hastily rose, and, in a voice of touching melancholy, replied—

“Pardon my presumption, Miriam, and, when I am far from you, think of me at least with kindness.”

“Far from me!—when, whither are you going?” asked Miriam, quickly, and surprised out of her caution by his unexpected words and manner.

Atherton had turned from her, but the hurried and anxious tone in which she spoke revived his hopes, and instantly recalled him.

“You alone can decide for me, Miriam,” he said, eagerly, “for I place my destiny at your disposal.”

“You have chosen a blind guide,” said Miriam, with recovered composure, “since I am entirely ignorant of your circumstances and designs.”

“Why, Miriam,” returned Atherton, “do you thus misunderstand me? need you any further proofs to convince you, that, without you, every place must become dreary to me, and every enjoyment a source of bitterness?”

“Suffer me not,” replied Miriam, with a flushed cheek and unsteady voice, “to interfere with your pursuits, or to interrupt the plans of enjoyment which have drawn you hither.”

“Happiness is the object of my pursuit,” said Atherton, “and I find it centred in you. Restless and disappointed, I left my native land; but, in your presence, life has renewed the sunshine and beauty which gladdened my early days, and which, removed from you, would again wither and fade away. Dearest Miriam, you alone are the inspirer

and the object of all my hopes, and surely you cannot, will not, condemn me to protracted misery and disappointment.”

“Nothing in my power to grant,” said Miriam, with emotion, “would I willingly deny to you.”

“And are not your hand and heart at your own disposal?” asked Atherton, with animation. “Grant me these, dear Miriam, for these only can render me happy.”

“They can never, never be yours!” replied Miriam; and hastily withdrawing her hand, she covered her eyes, and remained silent.

“Have I been deceived?” asked Atherton, steadily regarding her pale cheek and quivering lip. “Oh, no! I feel that you love me, Miriam, and no cruel interdiction shall ever separate us!”

“Leave me, Major Atherton,” said Miriam, mildly. “I have not sought to deceive you; but it is enough to know that our fates can never be united.”

“And would you thus banish me from your presence,” asked Atherton, impetuously, “without assigning the cause, without one word of regret? No, Miriam, never will I leave you, unless your own lips pronounce that I am hateful to you.”

“And would that render you more contented?” asked Miriam, with a mournful smile. “I would not part from you, but with expressions of gratitude and kindness.”

“And what would they avail me?” returned Atherton, “if deprived of your society, and robbed of every hope which can render life supportable?”

“Would you reject my friendship, because you cannot receive my love?” asked Miriam. “Has not our intercourse been hitherto more rational, more delightful, than it can ever be, when passions such as these agitate our interviews?”

“Hitherto I believed my tenderness returned,” said Atherton, “and indulged the hope, that a closer union would at length bind us to each other. Let me still indulge that hope, Miriam, however distant the day, allow me still to believe my constancy will be crowned with success, and I can patiently endure the tortures of suspense, and the agony of protracted hope.”

“It is impossible,” said Miriam; “deceive not yourself with an expectation which can never be realized; forget that you have ever known me, Atherton, or remember me only as a friend, a sister.”

“And is it you, Miriam, who thus condemn me to despair? And with a voice so gentle, a face so mild and benignant? Tell me,” he added, almost wildly, “is your heart impenetrable, or have you devoted it to another?”

“Do not torment yourself with suspicions which are groundless,” replied Miriam; “but should you feel more resigned, Atherton, to believe your fancied unhappiness shared by me? would it be any alleviation to find me also doomed to struggle against a passion which my reason would condemn, and my duty could never sanction?”

“No, dearest Miriam,” said Atherton, “I am not so very selfish; but tell me why should your reason and your duty disapprove it? and what is this mighty obstacle to our love? can no sacrifice, no exertions of mine, remove it?”

“No, none which I can expect or desire from you,” said Miriam.

“Is it my religion alone?” pursued Atherton; “will your father blast all the opening prospects of my life, because my faith is different from his own?”

“Ask me not,” said Miriam, rising with agitation; “why should we prolong a conference so painful to us both?”

“Stay yet a moment longer,” said Atherton, earnestly; “do not reject me, Miriam, till your father returns, and I can plead my cause to him. Tell me only, that if *he* does not reprove my wishes, *you* will listen to the pleadings of my love, and I may yet look forward to success and happiness.”

“You ask what I cannot, ought not to grant you,” replied Miriam; “and why should you increase the bitterness of disappointment, by vainly indulging hopes which can never be realized?”

“The cause exists in your own indifference,” said Atherton, vehemently; “why should I seek farther for it? Every word you utter is but a new proof that I deceived myself in believing you honoured me with your regard.”

“Is there no medium,” asked Miriam, with a trembling voice, “between the extravagance of passion, and the coldness of indifference? But I forgive your injustice, Atherton; in a moment of cooler reason you will feel that I do not deserve it; that I am not so ungrateful as you now believe me.”

Miriam turned from him as she finished speaking, and bent her head to conceal the tears which filled her eyes; but Major Atherton again seized her hand, and with all the inconsistency of passion, exclaimed,—

“Miriam, you cannot love me, or you would not yield thus calmly to the cold dictates of rigid duty; you would not banish me from your presence without one word of hope, one smile of encouragement! Dearest Miriam, I could endure every thing, were I only assured that you understood my feelings and shared the bitterness of my regret.”

“At least, believe,” said Miriam, mildly, “that you have excited many anxious thoughts, many emotions that I would fain avoid, by a display of impetuous and ungoverned feeling, which I had not expected from you; and, pardon me, Major Atherton, which I must consider unbecoming your principles and character.”

“I cannot endure your reproaches, Miriam,” replied Atherton; “if you do not love, at least pity and forgive me. But what avails it?” he added, in a tone of sadness; “and why should I still linger here? Forget this interview if possible, and think of me as you were wont to do, in the early days of our acquaintance; and now farewell, beloved Miriam! perhaps for ever!” and he pressed her unresisting hand with fervour to his lips.

“What mean you,” said Miriam, with quick alarm, “and whither are you going? surely you contemplate no rash enterprise?”

“I go from you,” said Atherton, “and where, it matters not; all places are henceforth alike to me.”

“Say not so,” replied Miriam; “but rather exert the firmness of your spirit, and subdue a predilection, which it is your duty and interest to repress, and which must yield at length to the assuasive influence of time.”

“Impossible! it never can,” said Atherton; “do not seek to move me from my purpose; do not, Miriam, shake the feeble resolution I have struggled to acquire; here, I cannot remain with safety, and absence from you may perhaps render my disappointment less insupportable.”

“Go then,” said Miriam, vainly endeavouring to speak with composure; “and may God watch over you and protect you.”

Atherton still held her hand with deep but silent emotion; fearful to trust himself again to speak, yet reluctant to tear himself from her presence; when the sudden entrance of Mrs. Weldon aroused him to immediate exertion. Too much agitated however to enter

into an explanation, which her looks seemed to demand, he rushed hastily past her, and in a moment was in the open air.

The evening was closing in, shrouded with clouds and gloom, though some faint streaks of light which lingered after the setting sun, seemed to give promise of a brighter morrow. But Major Atherton felt this darkness far more congenial to his feelings than the glare of day, and, closely enveloped in his cloak, with even his face concealed within its folds, he wandered on, he knew not, cared not whither, till he found himself approaching the sea-shore. Atherton threw back the cloak, and looked earnestly upon the restless ocean: the monotonous moaning of the waves as they broke upon the pebbly beach, the whistling of the wind, and the shrill cry of the sea-birds, as they swooped to dip their wings in the watery element, and eddyed around his head in returning to their craggy nests, —dreary as were the sounds, they combined to fill his mind with a melancholy, but soothing influence. As he stood thus, his eyes were involuntarily attracted by a small vessel lying at anchor, from which proceeded the sounds of labour; and, in the imperfect twilight, he perceived several persons busied at the hatchways, while others were repairing the masts, apparently in preparation for an intended voyage. Atherton instantly recognized the Massachusetts bark which had been some time in the harbour, and, prompted by a sudden resolution, he sprang upon a projecting rock, and leaped from crag to crag, till he came near enough to hail those on board. He was answered by a respectable looking man, who seemed to be the master; and of him Atherton inquired if “they were bound to the Massachusetts Bay?” and received a civil reply in the affirmative.

“And how soon do you intend to sail?” pursued Atherton.

“To-morrow, if the wind is fair, and it seems to be turning about the right way.”

“Can you take a passenger with you, master?” asked Atherton.

“We have room and to spare,” replied the man, “if you can put up with our poor fare and accommodations.”

“I care not for that, friend,” returned Atherton, “and shall hold myself in readiness to depart with you.”

“We will get things in the best order possible, and the king can do no better,” said the man; “and, God willing, we hope to clear out of port at an early hour.”

“The sooner the better,” said Atherton; “and I owe you thanks, master, for your readiness to oblige.”

Considerably relieved by this unexpected arrangement, Major Atherton hastened homewards; but as he re-entered the house he had lately quitted with such buoyant hopes, the mental change which a few hours had produced sensibly affected him, and, yielding to the excitement of his feelings, he threw himself into a chair, and covered his face with his hands. Captain Standish, whom, in the agitation of the moment, he had not observed, alone occupied the apartment, and regarded his unusual conduct with extreme surprise, not unmixed with alarm.

“Cousin Atherton,” he at length said, “are you stark mad? or what, in the name of wonder, ails you?”

Atherton started at the sound of his voice, and, after struggling a moment to regain his firmness, replied—

“Excuse me, sir, but I did not see you. I could think of nothing but my own selfish regrets and disappointment.”

“Speak out frankly, like a soldier, Edward,” returned the Captain; “I am more in the dark than ever. But I always thought you would get no good by going so often to Plymouth, and taking such long walks in the night air.”

“I have, indeed, met only with evil,” said Atherton, bitterly; “but who could have believed it existed under so fair a form?”

“Ah! I begin to understand you,” returned the Captain; “something about my rose-bud, I’ll warrant you—a love-quarrel, perhaps; but it will soon be made up again, if I have any skill in smiles and blushes.”

“No, no,” said Atherton, quickly; “I shall never see her more!”

“You will think better of that to-morrow, cousin Atherton; and so bear up with a good heart; and remember, girls are apt to mean more than they say, and sometimes say more than they mean.”

“She does not—I know but too well,” replied Atherton; and, after a short pause, he added, “I wish not to withhold my confidence from you, sir, but allow me to be brief. She has slighted my love, rejected my hand,—and what remains for me to seek or enjoy?”

He walked across the room with hurried steps as he concluded; and the Captain, whose countenance expressed a lively sympathy, took his hand kindly, and said—

“This must not be, Edward; depend upon it, there is some mistake—some foolish whim, perhaps—for Miriam may love to tease, as well as the rest of her giddy sex; but suffer me to speak with her—I can explain all—and it may yet be well with you.”

“It cannot be,” returned Atherton; “she will not listen to you; neither can I suffer her to be persuaded, if her heart is not interested, to plead my cause. No, I would never endure to receive her *compassion* as a substitute for her love; and, if duty is the obstacle, I ought not, perhaps, to oppose it. I thank you, sir, for this— for all your kindness to me; and think me not ungrateful— but, to-morrow, I must quit your hospitable roof for a season. At present I should but burthen you with my society; and, in absence, I hope to subdue a weakness, which I blush to expose. Nay, seek not to dissuade me,” he added, seeing the Captain about to speak; “and I must now beg permission to retire.”

Captain Standish offered no further remonstrance, aware of its inefficacy, at the moment of keen excitement; and, hoping he would be disposed to listen more favourably, after a night of repose had in some degree soothed the irritation of his feelings.

## CHAP. VI.

Methinks I have a curiosity  
To know this country, that for ages past  
Lay hid, and you have now found out at last.

WOLCOTT.

CAPTAIN STANDISH on the following morning renewed his arguments and intreaties; but they proved equally ineffectual as on the preceding evening, to change the determination of Major Atherton, though he had recovered his usual self-possession, and even a degree of his customary cheerfulness. Pride, alone, would doubtless have done much to sustain him under his disappointment, but in addition to this powerful aid, he indulged a secret persuasion that Miriam Grey was actuated by duty, rather than inclination, in rejecting his suit; and with it the hope that time would produce a change in her decision, which at present he could not effect: and situated as she was, particularly during her father's absence, he, perhaps, ought not to attempt. A few hours of cool reflection convinced him of the weakness and folly of yielding to the impetuosity of his feelings; and, happily, his mind had been early regulated by principle, and subjected to the government of reason, while he possessed that elasticity of spirit which always rose with renewed energy from the pressure of misfortune.

Captain Standish was pleased to find that the subject of his intended visit to the Massachusetts interested the mind of Atherton, and readily consulted with him on the most probable means of rendering it useful and agreeable; and also prepared several letters which would introduce him to persons of distinction there. These brief preliminaries being settled, Atherton bade farewell to his kinsman, with the promise of returning as soon as circumstances could permit; and making a hasty call at the Governor's as he proceeded on his way, before the hour of noon he was wafted from the harbour of Plymouth.

Major Atherton sighed as he looked back upon the friendly shore he was quitting; and the dreariness of nature, the leafless trees, the stubble fields, the hills embrowned by frost, and the vallies withered by the approach of winter, presented a striking contrast to the same scene, as he had first observed it, when in the luxuriance of autumn, waving with the golden harvest, rich with variegated foliage, refreshed by verdure, and animated with flocks and herds. For a moment the gloomy analogy seemed applicable to the change produced in his own feelings. But shaking off such melancholy reflections, he turned his eyes towards the blue hills of Massachusetts, which appeared to dilate as they approached nearer and nearer; and the clouds that rested on their summits gradually rolled away, unveiling their majestic proportions; and again the bewitching spirit of adventure, the all-powerful charm of novelty, took possession of his mind. The day, notwithstanding, passed tediously away; the after part of it became cloudy, and their course was impeded by contrary winds; and chilled and weary, he retired early to the birth allotted him.

As soon as Atherton awoke in the morning, he hastened on deck to note the progress they had made, and with delighted surprise found the vessel just entering the harbour of Boston. So novel and beautiful was the scene presented to his view, that he

could scarcely persuade himself that he was not suddenly transported to the regions of fairy land.

A slight fall of snow, which descended during the night, had invested the earth with its fleecy covering, and robed every object with a drapery of dazzling white, finely contrasted to the brilliant azure of the cloudless sky, and the deep green of the ocean waves. The numerous islands which gem the waters of the bay, all wore the same unsullied vestment; while each tree was tufted with the wintry foliage, which wreathed the smallest spray, and every slender shrub and clustering vine trembled beneath the feathery burthen.

But, even while gazing, the glittering pageant faded from the eye, the warm beams of the rising sun spread like a blush over the stainless surface, and yielding to their influence, the delicate frost-work melted from tree, shrub and vine, and descended in broken masses to the ground. As nature threw off the fantastic dress she had assumed, Atherton was powerfully struck by the grandeur of her form, and the endless variety of lineament which characterizes her, in a land where the magnificent and the beautiful are blended with such exquisite and unrivalled skill. The vessel was passing through the narrow channel which forms the entrance to the harbour, and then expands into a deep and capacious basin; on the left, the Blue Hills were still visible, forming a part of the lofty range which rises gradually from the shores of the Massachusetts, almost encircling the coast, and broken at intervals into deep ravines and extensive vallies, then almost in the untutored wildness of nature; where many a silver stream rolled its fertilizing waves, unmarked by any eye save that of the Indian hunter, and unimproved but by the industrious beaver, who erected his ingenious habitation on its banks.

Major Atherton gazed with unwearied pleasure on the boundless prospect; lovely and majestic in its outlines, though the freshness and bloom of summer were wanting to complete its attractions, and clothe with verdure the undulating forests and fruitful plains. Near him were the commanding heights of Dorchester, then unknown to fame: more distant, the wood-crowned eminence of Noonantum, where soon after commenced the missionary labours of the American apostle, the devoted Eliot, who there gathered around him the red children of the forest, and instructed them in the duties of religion and the arts of civilization; nearer again, arose the memorable summit of Bunker Hill, where the first laurels were plucked to garland the brow of liberty; while far in the northern horizon, like floating clouds, were visible the stupendous mountains which pervade the then unexplored regions of New-Hampshire. Traces of cultivation were apparent within this extensive range; and that spirit of enterprize which marked the early settlers of New-England, and has never deserted their descendants, was already observable in the rapid improvements which their industry had accomplished. In many places the axe of the adventurer had felled the trees of the wilderness, and in their stead appeared at intervals the clustering tenements, the mud-walled church, and wooden palisade, denoting the foundation of a town or village, most of which have since risen into wealth and importance.

But the attention of Atherton was confined to a narrower circle, as they advanced into the harbour, and swiftly glided on between the beautiful islands which it embraces. A few of these were still in a state of nature; some were barren rocks, others thinly wooded, and several partially cleared and improved. One, called the "Governor's Garden," and appropriated particularly to his use, and which is still in possession of the lineal

descendants of the first Governor of Massachusetts, was arranged with considerable regularity and taste, and prettily contrasted with the wilderness of those around it. Noddle's Island, on which was situated the mansion-house of Mr. Maverick, well fortified against hostile attack; and Castle Island, with its fort and battlements, the crimson banner of royalty floating from its walls, and the guards, in military costume, pacing their rounds with measured steps, gave an air of spirit and vivacity to the scene.

Boston, the now admired and celebrated capital of New-England, then in its infancy, and presenting the appearance of an inconsiderable hamlet, burst upon the view, with that commanding grandeur and beauty of situation, which still distinguish it; but almost in the rudeness of its native charms, which have long since been exchanged for the garniture of wealth, and the confusion of business and pleasure. Major Atherton remarked every object with interest; and though now accustomed to the rural simplicity of American towns, the local advantages and superiority of Boston over any that he had yet seen, excited his admiration; while his approach to it renewed the novel and delightful sensations, which he felt, on first viewing the coast of Plymouth.

It was yet early in the morning, when the little vessel anchored, not far from a cliff at the eastern part of the town, which, with two sister hills, formed a picturesque group, observable from a considerable distance, and originally gave the name of *Trimountain* to the place. But succeeding generations have nearly levelled them, and their site is now covered with broad and paved streets, and ornamented with the splendid mansions of the rich and fashionable, and the costly edifices of public munificence.

Atherton gladly accepted the civilities of the master of the boat, who offered to conduct him to the only inn which Boston then contained; where he found decent accommodations, and an apartment which was at least cleanly, and entirely at his own disposal. Having taken formal possession of his new lodgings, Major Atherton ordered some refreshments, of which he invited his guide to partake, whose decent manners and obliging conduct, since they had been thrown together, he deemed worthy of some attention. The invitation was accepted, with many apologies, by his humble companion, who however seemed duly sensible of the honour, and resolved to shew his gratitude by doing ample justice to the well-dressed viands set before them, which, to Atherton particularly, formed a welcome contrast to the coarse provisions served up during their voyage. The table was prepared in a room, apparently set apart for the important business of eating and drinking; there were in it oaken tables of every size, and benches of divers lengths, suited to the number of guests; and moreover, an abundance of wooden trenchers and pewter pots in readiness at a moment's warning, with all the apparatus liable to be put in requisition by the imperious cravings of hunger or thirst. But on this occasion the landlord had garnished the board with his choice service of shining pewter, having previously received information from the master that Major Atherton was a gentleman, and not sparing of his money; and withal, a kinsman of the Plymouth Captain. Yet it behoves us to add, that the good woman who ruled the household and himself, refused to deliver up the platters, which she had cleaned with her own hands, until, by peeping through a broad crack in the partition, she received ocular demonstration that he was a genteel and comely youth:—from which we may infer, that even in the golden days of puritanism, women would sometimes dispute the commands of that nobler sex to whom they owe the most dutiful submission.

They were scarcely seated at table, when Atherton observed a man of peculiar appearance sauntering past the half-open door, and looking in upon them with suspicious curiosity. He was evidently of the lower order, and his large gaunt figure was rendered more ungainly by a total disregard to the outward man, touching the manner of apparel. His broad turned-up nose and thick lips, which seemed formed for vulgar good-nature, were drawn down to the utmost limits that the longitude of his face would admit, and contracted in an ascetic expression, not at all relieved by the ungracious leer of his greenish eyes, which stood forth like the orbs of a beetle, and were surmounted by a square-built skull, clipped with the formal precision of self-complacent sanctity. Having passed and re-passed the door several times, he boldly entered, and threw himself on a bench with the air of one who is conscious of possessing authority, which he is, nevertheless, somewhat afraid of executing; and continued to regard Atherton and his companion with immovable gravity, noting with particular attention whenever they raised the cup to their lips.

Major Atherton for some time disregarded this scrutiny, but as the stranger discovered no disposition to retire, he at length felt vexed with his impertinent intrusion, and endeavoured to reprove him by a look of stern displeasure. For a moment it proved successful; he twisted on the seat, and with some violence twirled between his fingers a small baton which he carried; but as Atherton returned to his employment, in the belief that he had effected his object, the other also resumed his dull gloomy composure, and again fixed his eyes on them in the most annoying manner. Atherton, provoked in spite of himself, at the unmannerly inquisition, asked, in a tone of severity,

“Is there aught you would desire of me, Master, that you thus obtrude into my presence?”

“The godly rulers of our land,” replied the man, with a slow, emphatic accent, “have raised up me, their unworthy servant, to execute their will; and for this purpose have I now come hither.”

“And have they appointed you,” resumed Atherton, “to watch the motions of strangers, and thrust yourself upon them undesired?”

“Such is mine honourable employment,” returned the other; “even to purge iniquity from the land, and preserve our city from pollution.”

“You have chosen a singular method to effect this salutary purpose,” said Atherton; “but I must beg you to explain it more at large to me.”

With the manner of one who is about to commence a homily, the stranger stretched out his hand and replied: —

“Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath redness of eyes? they that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine.”

“We are not among those ‘that rise up early’ to ‘follow strong drink;’” returned Atherton; “and the suspicions you seem to entertain of us are quite unfounded; we can therefore spare you the trouble of further attendance here.”

“He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it,” replied the other; “and therefore must mine own eyes be faithful witnesses in the things whereunto I am called.”

“Your lips would be the fitter vouchers in this instance,” said Atherton, who began to feel his curiosity excited by the singular character and employment of his new acquaintance; “and you need but taste of mine host’s home-brewed ale, to be convinced he has paid due regard to the rules of sobriety in the admixture of its ingredients.”

The stranger slowly waved his hand, as if to repel the temptation, and replied: —  
“Look not thou upon the wine when it red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; which — as our worthy minister remarked when exhorting from that text,— is applicable unto any liquor that may tempt the ungodly to drink to excess and surfeiting.”

“And by what authority,” asked Atherton, “are you empowered to scrutinize the conduct of individuals who may chance to sojourn here?”

“By the authority of those who are set as watchmen on the walls of our Zion,” replied the other; “whose duty it is to see that riot and drunkenness prevail not within the city of their habitation.”

“I am not disposed to dispute your office,” said Atherton, “though it is so extraordinary, that a stranger might well be excused for doing so — neither do I feel obliged to submit to your judgment, or at all inclined to endure your intrusive examination.”

“In which case,” replied the constable, “the well known laws of the colony must be my refuge, seeing they will uphold me so long as I bear this staff, which like the rod that was borne by Aaron of old, is a just symbol of my power.”

“And in all cases, if I understand you rightly,” said Atherton, “you are constituted a judge over the heads and consciences of those who come here, and are entitled to decide how much each can bear?”

“It is even so,” replied the other, “touching the strangers who enter within our gates, and sit at our public boards; they being allowed to drink freely, what in my discretion I may opine sufficient; and no more is permitted to be given unto them.”

“You must exercise a thankless office,” said Atherton; “and is any penalty attached to the violation of your commands?”

“I am commissioned to apprehend such offenders, and detain them until they deliver up the ordinary fine,” replied the constable.

“You are witness that we have kept within the bounds of temperance,” said Atherton, rising from table; “but, at another time, I would rather pay a heavy fine than be vexed with such troublesome company.”

Major Atherton left the room as he finished speaking, intending to walk out and view the town; and the moment he had passed the outer door, the landlord, with a countenance which had lost much of its placid expression, entered the apartment still occupied by the constable, and in no very soothing voice said to him,—

“Master Constable, you will not leave me a guest to sit at my board! and you come here in such an unmannerly way to gaze at gentle and simple.”

“Master Cole,” returned the other, “we have heretofore had divers words touching this matter; but whether it is right to give heed unto your request rather than obey the will of those I am bound to serve, judge ye.”

“The Lord forbid I should seek to tempt you from your duty,” returned the landlord, in a conciliatory tone; “yet, sure I am, friend, that you would not wish to deprive me of my lawful gains, nor refuse to shew me a kindness which could not harm yourself.”

“Ye cannot serve God and mammon,” replied the immoveable constable; “and I will perform my duty like a faithful steward, and not look on while the sons of Belial drain the intoxicating cup, without lifting up my voice against it.”

“Now, prithee, Master Constable,” returned the host, “must you look at every thing before you? Instruct me, and you can, in the needfulness of that.”

“Expound unto me first, if it please you,” said the other, “wherefore the eyes of a man are planted like lamps in his forehead, unless it be to discern between the evil and the good?”

“Methinks one of yours might suffice as well as two of ordinary size,” returned the landlord; “and, if you will shut the other, friend, and let me keep on your blind side in a neighbourly way, you will lose nought by your civility, and I may gain somewhat in these hard times.”

“Get thee behind me, Satan,” replied the officer of justice, rising and striking his baton violently on the bench; “would’st thou tempt me to do iniquity in order to gratify thy greediness of gain?”

“Good Master Constable, thou dost altogether mistake me,” returned the landlord, obtruding his head from behind a tall elbow-chair, whither he had retreated for safety.

“I do but ask you to be civil to those who enter my doors; and, for the rest, no man can say that I have not honestly abided by the laws, albeit to the loss of my worldly profit.”

“It is not drunkenness lifting up its voice in our streets?” resumed the constable, striking the point of his staff emphatically on the floor; “and did not your own brother, Richard Cole, drink at your tap till he changed himself into a brute? and was he not, for the punishment thereof, and for an ensample unto others, sentenced by the honourable court to wear a red D about his neck for the space of one year.”

“What sort of an uproar have we here?” exclaimed the landlady, entering with some haste. “Is this the way you keep the peace, Master Constable, making an outcry that is a scandal in a gospel land?”

“Avaunt, woman!” said the constable, re-seating himself composedly, and motioning her away with his stick; “we need not your interference, nor any of your chattering sex, which, since the fall of Adam, hath been the cause of strifes and dissensions among the sons of men.”

“I wonder what you would do without us, poor shiftless drones that you are!” replied the dame, scornfully, and advancing still nearer to the baton from which her husband had retreated. “and tell me now what you have been doing to my good-man, that he is skulking behind the chairs like a fox in a hen-roost?”

“Thine husband hath sold himself to do evil,” replied the constable; “therefore did fear come upon him when I lifted up my rod of justice.”

“Out upon your false tongue now,” returned the woman, “is he not one who ‘escheweth evil,’ and withholdeth drink from those who importune him, even to the measure which you allow?”

“All who come hither can bear me witness, that I have ever kept a quiet and orderly house,” said Master Cole, venturing forward, encouraged by the boldness of his helpmate, “and whosoever affirmeth to the contrary, saith that which is false and not true.”

“Is it from a clear conscience, Master Cole, that you have held back the cup from the drunkard?” asked the constable, “or from the fear of man, lest you should lose your employment by disobeying those who have appointed me to determine the measure which shall be meted out?”

“And is it not enough that you do that?” retorted Mistress Cole, “without thrusting yourself into the presence of gentle-folk, and throwing your ungainly carcase in their way all the time that they are eating? I should not wonder if they came not hither again, after such like mannerless behaviour.”

“It would be well if they did not,” returned the constable; “our land hath been already too much infested with strangers, and the upholders of prelacy, who have caused many to err from the paths of knowledge.”

“Speak of that you know, master,” returned the dame; “there may be such among the base and low whom you daily see, but it is not every day we have a discreet and handsome young gentleman, like this Major Atherton, with us, who has served too the king’s majesty and his country. Is it likely that such an one should be given to strong drink?”

“The high and low, dame Cole, are alike in the eye of the law and the gospel; neither is the rich a whit less given to excess than the poor; and we, who are charged to execute the laws, are bound to be no respecters of persons, but to give unto each his portion in due season.”

“Well, well, do your own pleasure in that,” said Mistress Cole; “but my good cooking, and good management, will avail me nought, so long as a clumsy brute like you is crowding into everybody’s mess; and look you to it, master, it shall not be so again while I am mistress in this house.”

She shook her hand with a menacing gesture as she concluded, and seizing her spouse by the arm, led him from the room, and closed the door with some violence after her.

“Mistress and master, too, I think,” muttered the offended minister of the law; “but am not I Jeremiah Handcuff, a constable of this town of Boston, appointed by the most honourable Governor, with the consent of his worshipful council? Yes, that I am,” he added, rising with an air of importance, and balancing the insignium of his office upon his hand, “and so I will keep fast to my duty, come what may, and the law will uphold me.”

Thus finishing his soliloquy, the constable walked slowly from the house; but in passing through an adjoining apartment, he again encountered the landlady, who, with arms a-kimbo, stood directly in his way, apparently resolved not to yield one iota of her dignity or her room. Master Handcuff, animated by the same accommodating spirit, brushed hastily past her, and as he did so, knocked her round-eared cap completely awry.

“The Lord help us!” ejaculated the wrathful dame, as she adjusted her head gear, “when some people get raised up to office they take such airs upon themselves!”

“If you had kept out of his way, Deborah,” said her husband, “the man would not have run against you.”

“Sure now, Jacob,” returned the wife, “wasn’t it he that came in my way? But every body would’nt sit still, and see their wife insulted for nothing— no; and you wouldn’t once, Jacob;” and she applied a corner of her apron to her eyes; but Master Cole could not perceive that it was at all wetted, and calmly answered —

“You can stand your own ground pretty well, dame; and it is only ill will that one gets by meddling in another’s quarrels.”

“It is well I can, Master Cole,” said the indignant dame, twitching the apron from her eyes, “and I wish some other folk whom I could name knew how to exercise a proper and becoming spirit.”

“There is more than enough to keep the house in a turmoil from morning to night without my help,” retorted the good man; and, like a prudent general, he retired from the field, to avoid further contest and final defeat.

Major Atherton entered just as he quitted the room, and dame Cole instantly resumed her smiles with the facility so natural to her sex on similar occasions.

## CHAP. VII.

A robe of seeming truth and trust  
Hid crafty Observation;  
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,  
The dirk of Defamation.

HYPOCRISY, A-LA-MODE.

THERE were few things, perhaps, in the early settlement of New-England, more calculated to impress strangers with a just idea of the extreme strictness of its government and manners, than the rigid observance of the Sabbath day, which was universal throughout every class of citizens. Fines and imprisonment awaited those who disregarded it. Every species of labour during its consecrated hours was considered sacrilegious, and the most distant approach to levity— almost to cheerfulness of conversation or behaviour— reprehensible in the highest degree. It is even recorded of a worthy minister, that, being led away by the suggestions of Satan, he was thereby tempted to kiss his wife while arranging his bands in preparation for the pulpit, and was forthwith arraigned before a meeting of his church, and severely censured for the ungodly deed.

Major Atherton, on arriving at Plymouth, had been struck with this unusual respect for the institutions of religion, so strongly contrasted with the practice in his native country, where the principles of church government admitted greater license, and were particularly liable to abuse during a reign marked from its commencement by civil discord, and almost freed from those moral restraints which the unfortunate Charles might, in happier times, have suggested and enforced.

But in the Massachusetts' settlements this rigid discipline was even more remarkable than in the sister colony of Plymouth; and when Major Atherton arose on the morning of the first Sabbath that he spent there, he was for some moments unable to account for the perfect quiet which reigned in every apartment, so different from the bustle and confusion commonly attendant on a public house. The hum of business was suspended, the tapster's room deserted by its daily visitants, and in the kitchen— the usual scene of bustling importance— the landlord was quietly seated with his folio bible, and audibly perusing its sacred contents. He, however, occasioned no interruption to his worthy dame, who, having ranged her children on a bench, and commanded silence, proceeded in a still more audible voice to catechize them, occasionally stopping to give a hearty shake to some luckless urchin who betrayed signs of heedlessness or stupidity, in order to stir up his mind by way of remembering the oft-repeated task. Atherton thought that even the cat moved round on tiptoe, and that the animals in the cow-yard lowed with unusual gravity. The same monotonous calm every where prevailed; no persons were visible at the windows of their dwellings or in the streets, until the customary hour of public devotion arrived, when the inhabitants of every description sallied forth, and proceeded to the place of worship.

Boston at that time contained but one church, which stood not far from the spot now occupied by the old state-house, and was built with mud walls and covered by a thatched roof. Its interior corresponded with the rude architecture of the outside; and the

unadorned pulpit, the low benches, placed in rows to accommodate the Puritan congregation, alone distinguished it as a place of worship. To this humble temple, where the Most High was adored perhaps with more fervour and sincerity than in the gorgeous cathedrals of the old world, Atherton directed his steps, and reached the door at the moment the Governor and his retinue were entering.

Mr., afterwards Sir Henry Vane, who then held the office of chief magistrate, assumed a degree of state hitherto unknown in the colony; and which, though willingly conceded to his rank by many, became to others a subject of offence; and his administration, at first exceedingly popular, began shortly to fall into disrepute. The people were prejudiced in his favour by an appearance of sanctity unusual at his age, which did not exceed twenty-five; and by his strict conformity to the outward forms of the sect, which education and habit taught them to prize so highly. He was preceded by four serjeants, bearing halberds; and *his* solemn deportment, sheared head, and plain attire, with *their* grave aspect and ordinary apparel, might have suggested the idea of an inquisitorial judge and his attendant ministers of justice, preparing to conduct the ceremonies of an *auto-de-fe*. This assumption of dignity, however, appeared to Atherton almost ludicrous, considering the infancy of the colony, and the simplicity, not to say rudeness, of every thing appending to it, as well as inconsistent with the contempt professed by all classes for outward shew and parade, and which they carried to an excess in the ordinary concerns of life.

Mr. Wilson, the first minister of Boston, was absent on that day, and the pulpit was supplied by Mr. Cotton, his assistant; a man whose "praise was in all the churches," and whose name will always hold a distinguished place among the New-England divines. Few perhaps ever possessed so great an influence, both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs; his discourses often turned the tide of popular opinion, and soothed the irritation which at that time disturbed the tranquillity of church and state. His eminent piety, learning, and talents, insured him the highest deference of all classes; and it was no ordinary mark of respect which induced the founders of Boston to name the capital of their young colony after a town in Lincolnshire, then the field of his ministry, in the expectation that he would shortly come over and labour amongst them.

Major Atherton listened to him with delight; he was master of that persuasive eloquence which charms both the learned and the unlettered; and his sermons, though calculated to instruct and edify even the meanest capacity, by their strength and originality gave pleasure to the most fastidious taste; and in spite of the many localities and personal allusions which it was the fashion of the day to introduce into public discourses, they were so skilfully intermingled with the leading arguments and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, that even a stranger could not complain that they were wearisome. The form of worship was similar to that established at Plymouth, which the people of Boston professed to follow; but Mr. Cotton had introduced some slight variations; and to him also they were indebted for a particular discipline and government of the churches from that time known by the name of Congregational.

Atherton, on returning to his lodgings, found that among the duties of the Sabbath, fasting was not neglected; though his provident landlady had taken care to prepare a joint of meat on the preceding day for his especial use, which was served up cold, and without ceremony; it being, as she remarked, "a sinful waste of holy time to be busied about worldly concerns on that day of rest." Her children, with each a slice of

brown bread in their hands, kept peering at him from an inner apartment, with hungry and longing eyes; for the scrupulous dame allowed none but her guests to eat of the fat of the land on the Sabbath, except when she saw fit herself to take toll, in returning the fragments to her cupboard. Atherton, however, observing a little girl with a finger in her mouth, and her head on one shoulder, advancing cautiously beyond what her brethren would venture, took her on his knee, and offered her a share of his envied portion. But, afraid to disobey her mother, the child slid from his arms in silence, though not without securing a piece of the meat in her chubby hand, which she adroitly concealed under her apron, and ran off to devour in safety behind a wooden paling without the door.

Major Atherton attended divine service again in the afternoon; and though still powerfully interested by the eloquence of the preacher, he could not entirely restrain his thoughts from wandering back to scenes, which his present situation was particularly calculated to revive. It was about three months since he had first passed the threshold of a New-England meeting-house, then, as now, a stranger seeking repose of mind from change and variety, and unknown to almost every individual it contained. The image of Miriam Grey naturally blended with these ideas, and even in memory, the tones of her voice as he had then heard them, as they had since often been repeated, vibrated on every chord of his heart. But, determined to repel these dangerous reminiscences, in which pleasure and pain were strangely intermingled, and which he felt it weakness to indulge, yet almost hopeless to subdue, he at length succeeded in fixing his mind on subjects connected with the time and place, and joined both heart and voice with the congregation, in their concluding psalm.

As soon as the assembly was dismissed, he disengaged himself from the crowd, and striking into a narrow bye-path, followed its course till it brought him to the base of a wooded cliff which overhung the eastern bank of the river Charles. Beneath this cliff some of the early settlers of Plymouth had moored their shallows, when sent thither on a trading and exploring voyage, and landed near that spot, amidst a country inhabited by savages, and then governed by the Squaw Sachem of Massachusetts. But the seat of Indian empire since that time had undergone a rapid transition, and as Atherton looked round from the summit of the hill, scarcely a vestige of the native inhabitants remained throughout the peninsula. Step by step they were still retreating before the advance of civilization, and resigning their territories to the white people, who regarded them with distrust and jealousy; and sometimes, it is to be feared, added oppression and injustice to dislike.

On the opposite side of the river stood Mishawum, called by the English Charlestown; and recently occupied by a powerful tribe of Aborigines, who had also shrunk back as the wilderness was levelled before them, and the houses of the European planters arose on the ashes of their humble wigwams. This neck of land stretching between the rivers Mystic and Charles, was as yet but thinly peopled, although one of the oldest settlements in the Massachusetts Colony. But the ideas of policy or convenience, which induced the first settlers to separate at an early period, and form themselves into different societies, and establish numerous towns, though it perhaps more effectually spread the arts of cultivation, prevented the rapid growth of any particular place; and Boston itself, even then considered the metropolis, did not contain more than twenty dwelling-houses.

Still as Atherton looked round, and remarked with wonder the progress which had been made within a few brief years, he could not fail to regard it as a presage of future prosperity to the land, which Nature had so highly blessed, and even in infancy stamped with the features of a great and powerful nation. In musings of the past and future he forgot the lapse of time, till warned by the declining sun, which glanced brightly on the winding stream, then nearly encrusted with ice, except where the force of the current had broken a passage towards its entrance into the ocean. Atherton descended the hill, and pursued his way along the bank, ignorant where his steps were leading him, and often stopping as his eyes were attracted by the fantastic figures formed by fragments of ice thrown up by the tide, and glittering with a thousand different hues from the refracted rays of the sun. The river widening as it approached the sea, and gradually throwing off its frozen fetters, was dyed with a saffron tinge, and imaged on its glassy waves a stately range of trees which then fringed the western shore, on the site now improved as an important naval depot, from whence many of our gallant ships have ridden proudly forth to gather renown on the highway of nations, and returned laden with honour and victory.

Major Atherton had not proceeded far when he perceived the constable who had annoyed him so much the preceding day approaching him, with the same measured step, and examining him with that unmoved countenance and fixed stare which had then put his patience so severely to the test. He turned into another direction, and quickened his steps to avoid a conference; but his pursuer proved more nimble-footed than his heavy appearance gave reason to expect; and accelerating his speed in proportion to Major Atherton's, he shortly came directly in contact with him. Atherton took no notice of him, and this silent disregard seemed for once to put the impenetrable constable to his *wits' ends*. He hemmed thrice, in the hope it would inspire him with something with which to commence the conversation; but he was still unnoticed, even by a look of recognition. As a dernier resource he stepped boldly up to Atherton, and taking hold of his cloak, addressed him, though with rather less than ordinary assurance.

"Master Major Atherton, which I am informed is your name and calling, I must make free to tell you that I, Jeremiah Handcuff, am a constable in this town of Boston."

"Of that I am already informed," said Atherton, withdrawing from his grasp with an air of dignity which compelled the other to retreat some paces.

"Very like," he replied, after a moment's deliberation, "seeing that I am well known in mine office; and, though it doth not become me to say it, of approved fidelity in the performance of my duty."

"In that your works praise you, Master Constable; but bear in mind, I pray you, that there is a zeal which is not according to knowledge."

"Which I have also well considered," returned the constable, "having been early instructed by my mother in the sacred Scriptures, and, with her help, enabled to repeat the holy gospels, and divers other inspired passages of the Old and New Testament, even before I had attained unto my twentieth year."

"And did that knowledge recommend you to your present situation?" asked Atherton.

"Doubtless it was of weight in the minds of our pious rulers," he replied, "who promote unto honour such only as obey the commandments of God and the king; and, renouncing the errors of prelacy, walk honestly after the rules of the gospel, and the instructions of our godly ministers."

Atherton made no reply, but walked on still more rapidly, not a little vexed to observe the constable following at a brisk pace, until they came to a place where the road divided, when Atherton suddenly stopped, and, turning to him, said—

“Will you inform me, Master Handcuff, which road you intend to take?”

“Whichsoever may be best suit your inclination,” he replied, “seeing that it behoves me to follow you whithersoever your steps may incline.”

“To what purpose, and by what authority,” asked Atherton, indignantly, “do you thus presume to watch and obtrude upon me?”

“Master Major,” returned the other, in a soothing tone, “it would ill become me to give offence unto a gentleman of honourable quality like yourself; but, since our magistrates have established laws, and set up such persons as in their wisdom they deem meet to execute them, is it right for me to fall back like an unfaithful watchman? Judge ye betwixt thee and me.”

“Of what,” asked Atherton, “do you accuse me? What law have I been guilty of violating?”

“It is written, ‘thou shalt remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy,’” returned the constable; “and our rulers, for furtherance of this divine command, have been pleased to ordain fines and punishments on such as are found guilty of a breach in its observance.”

“I am unconscious of having broken any law, human or divine,” said Atherton; “and if I have, you must have regulations for the observance of this day unknown to other Christian countries.”

“Truly, our favoured nation hath cast off the unprofitable works of darkness, which still cling unto the worshippers of images and the lovers of vain ceremonies, and therefore refraineth from all those sinful amusements which have proved a stumbling block unto many weak brethren.”

“Surely,” said Atherton, “the innocent recreation of walking in a grave and orderly manner is not included in your list of offences.”

“It is a trespass on holy time,” returned the other, “to be gadding abroad, and seeking divertisement by means which are not appointed on the Lord’s day; and the offender is to be dealt with accordingly.”

“I would recommend to your rulers,” said Atherton, “to make their laws more public; for they are too extraordinary to be remembered and understood without much painful study.”

“They are written upon the hearts of this people,” said the constable; “and all others who reverence this day aright will be withholden from profaning it.”

“Our ideas on that subject,” said Atherton, “may differ essentially, and what you term profanation may to me seem perfectly harmless; but, be that as it will, my sojourn here has been so brief, that I do not feel accountable for a slight breach of local regulations, of which I was entirely ignorant.”

“Nevertheless, that doth not discharge me from my duty,” replied the pertinacious officer; “nor can I suffer ‘sin upon my brother,’ without incurring reproach from those who, peradventure, would gladly take occasion to deprive me of mine office, which I make bold to say, I have maintained with credit both to myself and the town which I have served.”

“Doubtless, Master Handcuff, you have done to the utmost of your abilities; but I would learn from you what penalty is exacted from those who are found walking unnecessarily on the Sunday?”

“Say not Sunday,” replied the other, with a look of solemnity; “that being, as our minister has instructed us, a superstitious and idolatrous word no longer used by true Christians; but the Sabbath, as it was called by God’s ancient people the Jews, and also by the apostles; or the Lord’s day,— so it is termed by many of his precious servants in these later times.”

“Be it so then,” said Atherton, impatiently; “and now have the goodness to answer my question.”

“Touching the penalty for profaning the sabbath day, if I remember rightly,” returned the other, “it is for the first offence a fine not exceeding ten shillings; but if the offender persist in his transgression, he is given over to the stocks or the whipping post, or house of correction, according to the discretion of the magistrates, whose eyes are continually upon evil doers.”

“I thank you for your information,” said Atherton, “which may prove of use to me hereafter; and so wishing you but few offices of the kind to perform, I will bid you good night.”

Atherton passed on, and the constable stood irresolute, apparently loth to proceed to extremities, yet unwilling to appear slack in discharging his duties; but after a moment’s hesitation he stepped briskly after Atherton, and elevating his black staff with an awkward attempt at dignity, he said, —

“In the king’s name, Major Atherton, I make bold to command you to stop.”

Atherton did stop involuntarily; surprised and offended at the unexpected summons.

“Wherefore is this continued rudeness?” he asked. “I would advise you, Master, to retire in peace, and suffer me to pursue my way unmolested.”

“There is no law which will uphold a man in resisting lawful authority,” replied the constable, resuming his customary and grave pertinacity of countenance and demeanour; “and seeing that I have detected you in violating the laws of our land, I would commend unto you, Master Atherton, to pay the ordinary fine like an honourable gentleman; and though it doth not become me to intermeddle with ‘filthy lucre’ on this holy day; yet I may not suffer you to depart until I have your word for a surety that it shall be forthcoming at my future demand.”

“I care not for the money,” said Atherton. “I would willingly give thrice the sum for any worthy purpose; but it shall not be extorted from me against my will, and for a sin of ignorance.”

“Just as you please,” replied the constable, sullenly. “I know well where to look for help, if so be I can’t get it without; but I hope your honour will not take offence at my walking behind you.”

“Not so long as you remain peaceable,” said Atherton; “and for my further instruction I would ask you at what time your Massachusetts’ sabbath is said to begin and end?”

“Truly,” replied the other, “we are wont to lay aside our worldly business at the setting of the sun on the last day of the week, and we keep the time holy until the same hour on the first day.”

“When you may again engage in worldly concerns, if I understand you right,” said Atherton.

“In a moderate degree it is deemed allowable,” he replied.

“I think then, Master Constable, you have less hold of me than you imagine; for, if I am not mistaken, the sun was quite down before I had the good fortune to meet with you.”

“Perchance it was so,” returned the constable, somewhat disconcerted; “nevertheless, you have been wandering over these fields and woods even from the time of the breaking up of our devout assembly.”

“And where were you, Master Handcuff, that you could watch me for so long a time? Have a care that you do not turn culprit as well as informer.”

“Mine eyes did not behold you,” replied the other, “albeit, I am credibly informed of that which I affirm.”

“I am little skilled in the law, especially on these subjects,” said Atherton; “but I think you may as well withhold your suit, friend, since you are likely to gather nothing but trouble from it.”

“We shall see,” muttered the constable, slackening his pace a little; and Atherton, resolved to break off the conference, redoubled his speed, and soon reached his lodgings.

He had, however, scarcely closed the door of his own apartment, when the constable, who had leisurely followed him, entered the common room, and threw himself doggedly on a bench. Mistress Cole, who was busily preparing the supper table, and in whose memory his late indignity still rankled, said to him in no very courtly tone,—

“What brings you here again, Master Handcuff? is it to stir up mischief betwixt my good-man and his lodger?”

“Mistress Cole,” returned the constable, “my peaceable disposition is well known, and therefore I forgive your uncharitable surmise; I have also other matters upon my mind, the which it will be better to discuss with thy husband, seeing that women have little knowledge of public affairs; neither are they gifted with understanding to comprehend them.”

“Dear, now! Master,” said the dame, in a soothing voice, “I can advise you better than my husband, who always cometh to me for counsel in matters of importance; and I think, Master Handcuff, it doth not become you to speak so lightly of women, who are created to be faithful helps unto mankind.”

“Truly,” said the constable, “God hath made all creatures suitable for their place and station; and it is well that he hath not endowed women with wisdom equal unto us; otherwise their subtle and meddlesome nature would breed continual mischief. But the matter of which I would speak concerneth your lodger, of whom I would bid you take good heed; for I greatly fear he is a prelatist, and given to contemn our wholesome laws.”

“Wheugh, man!” said the landlady, “you are altogether mistaken — did he not go to our meeting and hearken to the preachment of the word? and did not mine own ears hear him sing the psalms, with the congregation of God’s people?”

“It may be so, dame,” returned the other; “but who knows if he went not as a spy upon our actions, to report unto the bishops and romanists of his own country?”

“Fie on your base suspicions, Master Constable,” returned the dame, sharply. “I will be bound his handsome face was not given him to cover a black heart; so I pray thee do not go for to infest my good-man with any such like foolish notions.”

“Woman, thou art taken with his fair outside,” replied the constable; “has he not been wickedly walking on this holy day? and has he not thereby contemned the laws of this land?”

“And how should he, a stranger that he is, poor young man, know any thing about our laws?” returned the dame. “I thought you were a sensible man, Master Handcuff; but you are clean gone with the rest in these idle whims.”

Major Atherton entered the room before the constable had framed a suitable reply; and Mistress Cole’s supper being ready, he was obliged to take leave without an opportunity of resuming the conversation.

## CHAP. VIII.

Their dauntless hearts no meteor led  
In terror o'er the ocean;  
From fortune and from fame they fled,  
To heaven and its devotion. PAINÉ.

IN the course of the following day, Major Atherton repaired to the house of Mr. Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts, to whom he was furnished with a letter of introduction.

Mr. Winthrop was one of the original patentees who planned a settlement in the Massachusetts Bay, with a hope of enjoying their religious opinions unmolested, removed from the oppression of the English hierarchy, and the galling restraints of the civil government. He was descended from respectable ancestors, and inherited a valuable estate in Suffolk, which he converted into money to promote the great objects of his enterprise. Previous to embarking from his native land, he was elected governor of the future colony, by the unanimous voice of his associates; many of whom were gentlemen of high birth and noble alliance, as well as of distinguished piety and abilities. Ten years after the settlement of Plymouth, these adventurers landed on the shores of the New World; already regarded by many intelligent and pious minds, as the favoured region where religion would at length find a peaceful asylum from the storms of party spirit and intolerance, which had so long agitated the kingdoms of Europe.

Many circumstances render it doubtful whether the first company of settlers had actually seceded from the church of England when they left that country; but, however that may be, it is certain they immediately after entirely renounced its authority and forms, and erected the platform of a new and independent church, essentially different in its government and principles. But, in their solicitude to establish the interests of religion on a solid basis, and to promote a spirit of harmony, and create a bond of union in their worship, they resolved that it should be done in their own way, and according to their own ideas of right and wrong; and thus, like other fallible and erring mortals, who often mistake the means in their zeal to accomplish the end, they exhibited a spirit of persecution, which has entailed a lasting reproach upon their memory. Scarcely absolved from the odious tenets and oppressive thralldom of the mother church, they in turn erected an inquisitorial authority over the consciences of those who presumed to differ from them in judgment and opinion;—leaving an example which has been followed by too many of their posterity.

Yet we have reason to believe they erred with good intentions and upright hearts; and every candid mind will find a ready excuse for their failings, in the excitement of the times, and the comparative darkness of the age in which they lived;— an excuse inapplicable to those who indulge similar prejudices and passions in this more enlightened period of the world; while the redeeming virtues so beautifully exemplified in their lives, must at least command the reverence and admiration of all.

Governor Winthrop, justly styled the father of the colony, possessed in an eminent degree, that rare union of talents and virtues which fitted him for the station he was called to fill, and insured him the respect and affection of the people he governed. Yet his

popularity, the prudence and moderation of his character, and the disinterested liberality, which induced him to draw from his private fortune to relieve the wants of individuals and advance the public interest, could not shield him from the arts of the jealous and the cabals of the disaffected. Under various pretences, they had twice succeeded in procuring a vote against his election to the office of first magistrate; an office which he had held for several years with equal ability and wisdom.

At the time of Major Atherton's arrival in Boston, Mr. Winthrop filled the station of deputy-governor, having yielded his claims a third time, and under circumstances particularly painful to a noble mind,— not to the wishes of the majority, for they were in his favour,— but to the artifice of a faction which had risen up against him, and effected their designs through that persevering and subtle intrigue, by which, in elective governments, the minority are sometimes enabled to counteract the efforts of a rival party. Strange as it may appear, the proximate cause of this revolution was supposed to be a female, the noted Anna Hutchinson, whose religious opinions had acquired great influence in the country, and among whose adherents were found the supporters of Mr. Vane, the successful candidate. It is, however, more probable, that this ascendancy was produced by Henry Vane himself, assisted perhaps by the arts of Mrs. Hutchinson; for he had distinguished her by his attentions, and zealously embraced her tenets, which were extremely obnoxious to Mr. Winthrop. The multitude were gained by the sanctity of his appearance, his specious manners and address; aided by superior abilities, great fluency of expression, and the attractions of exalted rank. His father held a high station in the court of Charles; and there was a general belief in New-England, that the younger Vane was sent over by royal authority. These adventitious circumstances he improved to the utmost; and by the exercise of a profound dissimulation, — a sort of Jesuitical cunning, he deceived the minds of many.

His election to the government of Massachusetts has ever been considered a blot on the character of the times; and it undoubtedly blew the sparks of contention into a flame, which all the prudence of his assistants and immediate successors was scarcely able to extinguish. The christian forbearance and magnanimity of Mr. Winthrop were nobly displayed, in his readiness to accept an inferior office, under a man so much younger in years and experience, and whom his judgment could not approve. Influenced solely by the public good, he laid aside all personal feelings, and discharged his arduous duties with a fidelity and perseverance which increased his dignity, and recovered the esteem of those who had for a time withdrawn from him. Upright and conscientious in every relation of life, even those who differed from him in sentiments could scarcely find a blemish to censure; and when one was summoned by the inveterate Archbishop Laud, to speak against him before the king, his accusation proved a panegyric; and his Majesty expressed his concern that a person so worthy of trust and honour should be no better accommodated than in an American wilderness.

Something of this kind passed the mind of Atherton as he approached Mr. Winthrop's house, which though commodious and respectable, seemed scarcely fitted to the dignified station and ample fortune which he enjoyed. But he afterwards learned to value this extreme simplicity, as an instance of the self-denial which Governor Winthrop was accustomed to practise; for he had early discovered the necessity of economy and temperance to the prosperity of a feeble colony, and became an example of these virtues

in his own person and family, though at the same time the munificence and hospitality of his spirit were fully known and appreciated.

Atherton found Mr. Winthrop seated at a writing-table, with numerous papers spread before him, and still holding a pen, though engaged in earnest conversation with a man who stood beside him. There was an air of magisterial dignity, and even severity on his features, which instantly gave place to a smile of urbanity as he rose to receive Major Atherton, who immediately delivered the introductory letter of Captain Standish. Mr. Winthrop hastily glanced over the contents, and threw it by, saying,—

“Your arrival has just been made known to me, Major Atherton, and by one who I fear has caused you some vexation since your entrance into this land of strangers.”

Atherton, who had been diligently studying the countenance of Mr. Winthrop, now followed the direction of his eyes, which were turned towards the man whom he had before scarcely noticed, and in whose gaunt figure, grim visage, and protuberant eyes, he identified his late acquaintance the persevering constable. He looked even more gloomy than usual, and without moving a muscle of his face, continued standing as if resolved to await the conclusion of the conversation.

“My ignorance of your laws, sir,” said Atherton, “may have led me into a seeming contempt for them; and if so, I am ready to make any concession which *you* may deem necessary.”

“We are lenient towards those who err through ignorance,” replied Mr. Winthrop, “and in this instance must ask *you* to pardon the indignity which has been offered you, through Master Handcuff, who is somewhat apt to carry his zeal to an extreme.”

“Truly,” said the undaunted constable, “it becometh me to be ‘zealously affected in a good cause;’ for what saith the scripture? ‘because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, therefore will—’”

“Master Constable,” interrupted the magistrate, “we now give you leave to retire; and in future bear in mind, that we expect no one under our authority to transgress the laws himself, in a vain pursuit after others whom he may chance to deem worthy of reprehension.”

The constable looked rather crestfallen at this reproof; but without offering a word in reply or defence, depressed his black staff of office, and bowing profoundly left the room.

“I am afraid,” said Mr. Winthrop, as the door closed after him, “you will begin to think, Major Atherton, that our enemies in England have some grounds for the railing accusations they have brought against us, since you have been so much troubled from our regard to matters commonly considered of little moment.”

“If I had ever placed any reliance on their slanders,” returned Atherton, “my residence at Plymouth would have long since undeceived me; I have become a sincere admirer of New-England discipline, and truly wish that something equally effective might be adopted to check the growing licentiousness of my native land.”

“The change must be radical,” said Mr. Winthrop, “where the disease is of so long standing; but the evils which you allude to have suggested a useful lesson to the rulers of this colony; and though we do not wish to be over-scrupulous, yet the world is so much more inclined to excess on the side of error than of truth, that we conceive it incumbent on those who are appointed to prepare laws for the government of a new state, to render them conformable to the spirit and letter of the word of God. Yet even those are liable to

abuse, from the imprudence and want of judgment of some who are appointed to execute them.”

“Were all men,” said Atherton, “as indefatigable and undiscerning in their office as the one who has just quitted us, we should be less surprised at the misrepresentations of the malicious and discontented.”

“Those who choose to speak evil of us,” replied Mr. Winthrop, “do not lack either subjects or opportunities; and since the first planting of the colony, such as came hither from motives of ambition and interest, and were disappointed in their schemes, or reprov'd for their evil deeds, have not failed, on their return to England, to use their endeavours to render our government and character obnoxious.”

“There, sir, I believe they have in general met with deserved contempt,” said Atherton, “except with those whose prejudices or self-interest were gratified by listening to such calumnies.”

“And those are not a few,” returned Mr. Winthrop. “We have had to contend against public opinion and private interest, against religious dogmas and worldly prepossessions; but I trust the integrity of our conduct will at length put to silence the reproaches of our adversaries. Our most inveterate enemies are those who have been themselves engaged in forming plantations, which, from the dissoluteness of the companies, soon fell to ruin; and, among these, one Morton, ‘a pettifogger of Furnival’s-Inn,’ who began a settlement with some others at a settlement which they called Mount Wollaston, has never ceased to persecute us.”

“Do you refer,” said Atherton, “to the people whose unprincipled conduct drew upon them the vengeance of the natives, who demanded the death of one who had been detected in stealing from them; but, being a vigorous and useful man, they were unwilling to lose him, and, for a show of justice, or to satisfy their revenge, cheated even the wary savages, by hanging in his stead a bed-ridden and decrepid person?”

“You allude to a still earlier period of our history,” said Mr. Winthrop; “the people who resorted to that ingenious expedient, which, with other misdemeanors, involved them in deserved calamities, were associated with a Mr. Weston, and seated themselves at Wesagusset, now called Weymouth.”

“I have heard the anecdote related at Plymouth,” replied Atherton, “and it is probably blended in my mind with some other transaction of the kind.”

“Morton’s company was not a whit better,” said Mr. Winthrop. “Captain Wollaston, their leader, retired to Virginia, and the others, led on by Morton, set up for liberty and equality, named the place Merry Mount, and committed every kind of excess. Mr. Endicot, then recently arrived at Salem, visited them to reprove their folly, and cut down a maypole which they had erected; but they soon returned to their former courses, and the various settlements uniting with Plymouth, at that time the most powerful, your gallant kinsman, Captain Standish, with a few brave men, were sent to them, and, on their refusing to surrender, the Captain, with his usual decision, took them prisoners, and had them all conveyed back to England.”

“A mortification sufficiently severe to silence them, I should think,” said Atherton, “and insure their good behaviour in future.”

“They were dealt with very lightly by the council in England,” replied Mr. Winthrop; “and Morton has since returned to this country, and now dwells at Pascataqua,

where he still exercises the mean revenge of disturbing our peace as much as lies in his power.”

“Those two plantations are anomalies in the history of New-England,” said Atherton, “the only ones which have yet cast a blemish on its annals; and it is easy to imagine the grief and anxiety which their settlement and progress must have caused their more serious neighbours.”

“It is well for the country that they were so speedily ended,” said Mr. Winthrop, “for the contagion of their example was greatly to be dreaded. But it is a satisfaction to reflect that no other colonies have been founded here which had merely worldly gain and pleasure for their object. In every other we have reason to believe that religion, if not the moving cause, was at least deeply considered; and, indeed, no other principle seems sufficiently powerful to enable men, and even delicate and timid women, to struggle with hardships, and endure and persevere with such heroic fortitude.”

“It is in circumstances of difficulty and distress,” replied Atherton, “that the female character displays itself with peculiar loveliness; and man, with all his boasted firmness and superiority, will often sink beneath the weight of trials, which the unrepining constancy and unyielding patience of woman enables her to overcome.”

“I have seen instances of this,” returned Mr. Winthrop, “which might silence the sarcasms of the cynic and the jests of the profligate, who have ever shewn their spleen and emptiness by ridiculing those whose excellence, they are too selfish to imitate and too proud to acknowledge; and scarcely do I think that our labours in this wilderness would have been so greatly prospered, but for the encouraging smiles of women, whose cheerful spirits were buoyant, even in the midst of danger and distress, and whose undaunted minds imparted strength and resolution to the weary and faint in heart.”

“I doubt it not, sir,” returned Atherton; “and those refined and exalted virtues, which might have slumbered in the waveless calm of prosperity, have here unfolded into beauty and perfection. All that I have seen, every affecting incident which I have heard since I reached these shores, has increased my reverence and admiration for that gentle sex, to whom we are indebted for so many bright examples, who are often our guides, as well as pleasant companions, while travelling together through this pilgrimage of life.”

Mr. Winthrop smiled at the enthusiasm of his countenance and manner.

“I am too sensible,” he replied, “of the justice of your encomium, to attribute it to the gallantry of a young man and a soldier; and I believe the most sceptical would become converts to our opinion, were they but to judge impartially, or could they witness, as I have done, the equanimity and resolution so often exhibited in the female character. Even while quitting for ever the country endeared to them by every tie of affection— to many the abode of distinguished wealth and enjoyment — and about to encounter the dangers of the ocean, and seek a place of residence in an uncivilized, almost unknown world— their constancy remained unshaken, they had ‘counted the cost,’ and were resolved to meet every event without repining.”

“It generally requires a stronger effort,” said Atherton, “to abide by a resolution, than merely to form even the most difficult; and this then inhospitable coast must have presented terrors to the most disciplined imagination, and have caused the boldest spirit to waver.”

“There were doubtless some,” returned Mr. Winthrop, “who remembered with regret the ‘leeks and onions of Egypt;’ for even the meanest were reduced to straits

unknown to them before; and the higher orders were compelled to strive with difficulties, for which the delicacy of their education had ill prepared them. But He, who 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' was pleased to give them 'strength according to their day;' and though sickness and death invaded our feeble colony, and took from many of us the 'delight of our eyes,' they died rejoicing that they had lived to see a church planted in America, where their posterity might enjoy their religious privileges, 'with none to molest or make them afraid.'"

"The noble house of Lincoln," said Atherton, "I understand, has warmly patronized the cause of New-England, and contributed both in word and deed to its prosperity and advancement."

"Its most precious gift," returned Mr. Winthrop, "was its virtuous daughters, who, though accustomed to the elegancies and refinements of polished life, cheerfully 'forsook all for the gospel's sake,' and, without a murmur, endured the wants, and submitted to the privations which they were destined to encounter in this distant land; — adding lustre to their rank by the cheerful resignation with which they suffered adversity, and the graceful sweetness and condescension of their carriage towards those whom Providence had placed in an inferior station, but whom a common cause had united with them in the bands of Christian fellowship."

"The circumstance of their quitting England," said Atherton, "was familiar to me at the time; and I well remember it as an occurrence which was generally considered imprudent and hazardous in the extreme."

"With those who are accustomed to connect passing events with the things of this world only," said Mr. Winthrop, "that opinion must still prevail, and the result has, in some degree, justified their prediction. The Lady Arabella, who was united to Mr. Johnson, one of our assistants, a man of piety and worth, fell an early victim to the hardships of her situation, and was shortly followed to the grave by her afflicted partner. Her sister, the Lady Susan, who, with her husband and children, arrived at a later period, is now residing at Saugus: she enjoys a vigorous constitution, and is happily supported under the fatigues and difficulties, which proved fatal to so many of the early colonists. But you must pardon me, Major Atherton, if I have trespassed on your patience; every circumstance relating to the characters I have loved and revered, and every incident that has transpired in this country, which I have seen dawning and rising into light, and where my affections are now wholly fixed, are so interesting to my feelings, that I am sometimes apt to dwell too long upon them, and forget that to strangers they may be totally indifferent."

"They are not so to me," returned Atherton; "I can never listen but with pleasure to aught that relates to this country, where I have been received with a degree of kindness and hospitality entirely unexpected, but which I shall ever remember with satisfaction, and number the months I have passed here among the happiest of my life."

"I had scarcely expected," said Mr. Winthrop, "that the strictness of our customs and manners would be regarded with so much liberality by a stranger, and one, too, who has been accustomed to the freedom of a camp. I must begin to think we are less gloomy than our opposers are willing to allow; or, perhaps, I should attribute it to the candour of your mind, which is inclined to colour our New-England scenes as agreeably as possible."

“My early prejudices are enlisted in your favour,” returned Atherton; “and I am here continually reminded of scenes dear to my recollection, by the simplicity of manners and rectitude of principle of those around me, so congenial to the sentiments which my mother cherished, and endeavoured to instil into my youthful mind; though I must acknowledge I have been almost estranged from them since I first quitted my paternal roof, and engaged in the active duties of my profession.”

“As you have retained this predeliction,” said Mr. Winthrop, “even amidst the bustle and gaiety of a military life, we may hope it will be strengthened by a more familiar acquaintance with our opinions and pursuits, which, although they may present little to dazzle the fancy, I trust will leave much food for solid reflection, and that heartfelt satisfaction, which can never be derived from the vain and gaudy pleasures of the world.”

“My sentiments have been from childhood divided on these subjects,” replied Atherton; “and the habitual respect and reverence which I have ever felt for my mother’s creed, has often weighed heavily against the force of education, and the strength of hereditary opinion, which attached me to my father’s principles. But I ought to apologize to you, sir, for so long intruding on your time; I was not aware that the moments flew so swiftly.”

“I have passed them too agreeably to mark their flight,” returned Mr. Winthrop; “and I would urge you to tarry longer, did not some necessary business require my attention. I use no ceremony with you, Major Atherton, but it would give me real pleasure if you would consent to make my house your home during your residence in this place.”

Atherton declined his hospitality, being unwilling to intrude, and wishing to have his time entirely at his own disposal; and, with suitable acknowledgments of his polite attention, he took leave of Mr. Winthrop, after promising to dine with him on the following day.

Passing slowly onward, and irresolute whether to proceed to Governor Vane’s or wait another opportunity, Major Atherton’s curiosity was attracted by a small enclosure, which seemed a repository for the dead; and, with the conversation of Mr. Winthrop still vivid in his memory, he passed the slight paling which surrounded it, in the expectation of finding some memento of the ill-fated Lady Arabella. Numerous swelling mounds, some marked by a rude stone bearing a name and date, or inscriptive line engraved by the hand of affection, gave evidence that numbers had been called from their earthly labours within the brief space of time which had succeeded the settlement of the colony. But he looked in vain for the object which chiefly interested him. The remains of the noble daughter of the Earl of Lincoln had been interred at Salem, where she expired soon after her arrival, in the midst of usefulness and the bloom of youth, before the accomplishment of those plans which had cost so dear a sacrifice, and while yet destitute almost of a shelter, and but scantily supplied with the comforts and necessaries which her situation rendered indispensable. Her husband removed to Boston, but worn out by fatigue, and sorrow for her loss, he survived her a few weeks only, and was buried in a portion of his own grounds,— now bordered by Tremont street, and contiguous to the Stone Chapel. Such was the veneration in which his character was held, that others desired to be laid beside him; and the spot, thus consecrated by the ashes of the Christian and the patriot, is to this day preserved as a receptacle for the dead; and while succeeding generations are

gathering around him, the remembrance of his name and virtues are also fading from the records of time.

Atherton turned from the place filled with melancholy reflections, and was still indulging a moralizing mood when he reached the residence of Mr. Vane. The house of the chief magistrate was of small dimensions, and rather suited to the strictness of his principles, and his rigid conformity to the prevailing manners of a sect, than to the dignity of his rank and office. It was situated in a beautifully secluded spot, then commanding a fine view of the harbour and islands, and sheltered by a hill which has since been levelled to promote the objects of public utility, ornament and convenience. It was afterwards enlarged and occupied by the celebrated Mr. Cotton, to whom Mr. Vane presented it on returning to England.

The Governor received Major Atherton with marked politeness; indeed there was an appearance of frankness and affability in his manners, which invited confidence and regard, and which, united to a gravity of countenance and deportment, particularly agreeable to a people jealous of their peculiar forms, had gained for him an extent of popularity which he evidently prized, though anxious to appear utterly indifferent to it. To Atherton, this rare union of qualities so seldom attained, even at a mature age, appeared almost unnatural in one so young, and whose station and connexions had early brought him within the sphere of a dissipated court. Though compelled to admire the versatility of his talents, the intelligence and acuteness of his remarks, Atherton could not but admit the belief, that latent ambition and worldly policy had induced him to assume a character foreign to his real disposition and feelings. But Mr. Vane possessed, in an eminent degree, the art of adapting his conversation to the taste and circumstances of those with whom he associated; and on this occasion he thought proper to divest his discourse of that peculiar phraseology and sectarian cant which he had always at command, and often used to advantage. In discussing the political events of England, and alluding to scenes and persons familiar both to himself and Atherton, the latter became insensibly weaned from the prejudice he had unconsciously imbibed, and engaged with spirit in a conversation, which seemed once more to place him on the stage of active life. He had never till now, since his residence in America, met with any one whose recent and personal observation interested him in the passing occurrences and leading characters of his native land; and the subject became so pleasing to him, awakened so many dormant feelings, and so powerfully renewed the schemes of usefulness and enjoyment, which had of late been interrupted by a more absorbing passion,— that he retired with reluctance, when politeness compelled him to conclude his interview with the Governor.

The day terminated in a snow-storm, the most severe that Major Atherton had ever witnessed; and, during its continuance, he had ample leisure to indulge the feelings which had been called into exercise by the events of the morning, and to form many resolutions, the execution of which was however left to the mercy of circumstances. His first determination was to return to England early in the ensuing summer, there to engage in some pursuits which might obliterate the mortifying disappointment which still rankled in his mind, and again attach him to the ordinary pleasures and cares of the world.

“I shall weary of this unsettled state,” he thought, “when my curiosity is satiated with the wonders of the New World, and gladly retire to the peaceful shades of my childhood.” But he failed not to add the saving clause, “if the return of Mr. Grey produces no change

in the decision of Miriam.” A hope which still lingered in the recess of his heart, and coloured with its rainbow tints every vision of futurity.

## CHAP. IX.

These holy men, so full of truth and grace,  
Seem to reflection, of a different race;  
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,  
In such a cause they could not dare to fear. COWPER.

MR. WINTHROP assembled at his house on the following day, some of the most distinguished worthies of New-England; men whose characters and example were then the theme of praise, and whose memories still claim our highest respect and veneration.

There were the learned and patriarchal Cotton, the pious and benevolent Wilson, and the apostolic Eliot, with others equally renowned in the early history of the colony; and the feelings of Major Atherton were highly gratified on finding himself, by the easy politeness of his host and the courtesy of his guests, at once familiarized in a circle, which included so many of the wise and eminent of the age and country. Most of them were well educated, experienced in the ways of the world, and accustomed to the usages of polite life; and though liberality of religious feeling was not the crying sin of the times, Atherton had no reason to complain that the errors of prelacy, with which he was chargeable, exposed him to coldness or neglect. On the contrary, the company in general seemed well inclined to obey the apostolic command, "be courteous," which was enforced by the example of Mr. Winthrop, whose benevolence and urbanity were never subjected to the invidious distinctions of party-spirit. Nor were they so austere and formal, so gloomy and misanthropic as the revilers of that day, and the light and vain talkers of the present, have generally supposed. It was an age of superstition and fanaticism, and no sect of Christians was exempted from their influence. But the acts of intolerance which stain their public records, did not necessarily poison the stream of private happiness, or blight the tender charities of life; and while dissipation was suppressed, profligacy abhorred, and vice made ashamed to shew its distorted visage, the gentler virtues were brought into exercise; and we have reason to believe that our fathers were as exemplary in their domestic relations, as cheerful in social life, as light of heart, if not of head, as their more liberal-minded posterity.

The pleasures of society were not then, at least in New-England, encumbered with the thousand nameless fripperies of fashion, which destroy every rational enjoyment, and render a modern party a scene of expense and fatigue, of noisy mirth and Babel-like confusion. In the intellectual circle which Mr. Winthrop drew around him, Major Atherton was reminded of the refined hospitality of his father's house, where he had been accustomed to meet with characters distinguished for their merit and talents. If a certain air of grave precision marked the manners of the Puritans, and formed a partition wall between them and their brethren of other denominations, this gradually wore away, or was disregarded in the freedom of familiar intercourse, the interest of animated discussion, and the warmth of contending argument and opinion.

Mrs. Winthrop, whom Atherton had not before seen, was a sensible, well-bred woman, and presided with dignity and grace at her table, which was furnished with a variety of substantial fare, served up with a degree of neatness and order, sufficient to prove that the watchful eye of the mistress "looked well to the ways of her

household;”—a task which, in those days of primitive simplicity, before a love of show and dissipation, or the ambition of wearing the *blue stocking*, had infected all ranks and ages, was not disdained by the highest dames of the land. The conclusion of a long blessing, by Mr. Wilson, in which the reverend gentleman seemed to forget that dinner was cooling, became the signal for a general attack upon the well-dressed viands, in which both divines and statesmen signalized themselves by their vigour and abilities.

“I should inform you, Major Atherton,” said Mr. Winthrop, observing that he was about to pledge him in a goblet of wine, “that we have restrained the useless custom of drinking to each other’s health, which in our opinion tends to excess, by leading one another to taste, through courtesy, when it is neither needful nor desired. The fashion is now scarcely followed by any of our sober citizens, and, we trust, will soon be abolished altogether.”

“I am happy to relinquish a custom,” said Atherton, “which has often subjected me to inconvenience; though I have never felt at liberty to oppose it; nor was I before aware that any efforts had been made to discountenance a fashion so prevalent and so long established.”

“It is not easy,” returned Mr. Winthrop, “to break through the modes of society, which habit has rendered familiar and agreeable; but the sympathy of feeling which united our feeble band in the early days of our settlement, rendered the attempt practicable, and ensured its success; and we conceive it important, that no custom be allowed in the beginning of a colony, which may hereafter serve as a precedent leading to immorality or excess of any kind.”

“It is doubtless prudent,” said Mr. Cotton, “to use wise precautions, and establish just and salutary regulations; but as the state increaseth, errors and abuses will creep in, which the arm of the law cannot reach, and which the rich and powerful are alone able to suppress; the influence of their example extends through every grade of society; and whatever they refuse to sanction becomes unfashionable, and is of course rejected.”

“Such has been the influence of the higher classes in England,” said Mr. Vane, “and still is, to the destruction of principle and good order; but we may hope better of this favoured people, even that the example of our great men will be for those things which tend to ‘peace and righteousness.’”

“On that we may rely with some confidence,” said Mr. Eliot; “but I could wish the influence of Mr. Winthrop had been exerted, not only to abolish the foolish custom of drinking healths, but also the superfluous use of the liquor itself, which is often a snare even to the sober and temperate.”

“A moderate use of it is not forbidden us,” replied Mr. Winthrop; “even the apostle commends it for the ‘stomach’s sake,’ and our infirmities sometimes render it needful and salutary.”

“No one can object to it as a medicine,” returned Mr. Eliot; “but when it is not needful for the health, we may be allowed to scruple concerning a practice which causeth the waste of many precious moments, and is apt to introduce vain and unprofitable discourse.”

“I am not quite reconciled to your opinion as yet,” said Mr. Winthrop; “but we will not insist upon your practising what your conscience does not approve, and therefore allow you to pass the disputed beverage to Mr. Cotton, who, I perceive, is of my way of thinking.”

“I have no fear of excess in this honourable company,” said Mr. Eliot, smiling; “but, for myself, I prefer the wholesome draught of which our first parents partook in the garden of Eden, and which the Lord caused to flow from the rock of Horeb to revive the fainting tribes of Israel.”

“We have not all,” said Mr. Cotton, “the self-denial of our brother Eliot; or perhaps he is, from early habit, indifferent to that, which, from the same principle, is, in a manner, necessary to others.”

“You are probably right, sir,” returned Mr. Eliot; “but, speaking of habits, I know of none which at present infests our land more inveterate and pernicious in its consequences, than the immoderate use of tobacco, that unwholesome weed, cultivated and spread abroad by the idle planters of Virginia.”

“I am surprised,” said Atherton, “that a practice so inimical to cleanliness should ever have received the sanction of any civilized people.”

“The exhilarating qualities of the plant,” replied Mr. Winthrop, “produce a charm upon the spirits irresistible to those who have once indulged it; and it is, besides, a soothing amusement when inclined to indolence and solitude.”

“Our late sovereign,” returned Mr. Eliot, “never employed his time and talents to more advantage than in writing against this obnoxious weed; and I wish his royal advice had been treated with as much deference in this particular, as in others which have proved less advantageous to his subjects.”

“It is, after all,” said Governor Vane, “but a heathenish practice, and fit to be followed only by the wandering tribes who roam the wilderness in a state but little exalted above the savage beasts.”

“Wretched, almost inhuman, as these poor outcasts now appear,” said Mr. Eliot, “I trust the day is not far distant when the light of Christianity shall dawn upon them, when they shall be brought into the fold of the church, and taught the arts of civilization, and the blessings of social life.”

Mr. Eliot spoke with energy; and his benevolent countenance was animated with enthusiasm, as he touched upon a theme which excited his ardent hopes, employed his time, and exercised his talents, and to which the labours of a long and eminently useful life were devoted. As yet his plans were immature, and he was but preparing for those extensive exertions which afterwards led him to sacrifice every personal consideration, and carried him to the inhospitable abodes of savage man,—exposed to the wintry tempest and summer’s heat, and often wet with the dews of night,—that he might instruct the ignorant and superstitious natives, and lead them to the pure worship of the true God.

“This is a subject,” said Mr. Winthrop, “which has long excited the serious interest of the humane and pious, both in England and America; but, as yet, small progress has been made in the work, which is suffered to languish from lack of labourers to enter into the vineyard.”

“It presents almost insuperable difficulties even to the most sanguine mind,” replied Mr. Wilson, “and a spirit of courage and perseverance similar to that which actuated the holy apostles, can alone enable any one to prosper in the undertaking.”

“To me it appears less formidable,” said Mr. Eliot; “the cordial concurrence of our public assemblies, the prayers and alms of good and enlightened individuals, have already sanctioned the undertaking; and, with the armour of faith, and in humble

dependence on the assistance of Heaven, I would freely devote my poor abilities to forward so glorious a cause.”

“We hope much from the zealous concern you have manifested, Mr. Eliot, for these poor benighted heathens,” said the Governor; “and your success in mastering the difficulties of their language, we are ready to believe an earnest of more extensive usefulness, and still higher attainments.”

“Should Providence open a path for me in the wilderness,” returned Mr. Eliot, “I shall count no pains or difficulties too severe, which will enable me to prove my fidelity in my master’s service, and render me useful to those unfortunate beings, who, though created in the image of God, have sunk into the depths of barbarism and depravity.”

“No one has yet devoted himself to this work,” said Mr. Winthrop; “but our brethren at New-Plymouth have, by repeated acts of kindness and integrity in their dealings, engaged the friendship of the natives in those parts, which is the first step towards reclaiming them; and, in many instances, they have listened with docility to religious instruction, and on their death-beds expressed a wish that they might go to the Englishman’s God.”

“The conduct of Governor Winslow,” said Atherton, “towards the Sachem Massasoit appears to me equally politic and humane. Being dangerously ill, he nursed him for many succeeding days and nights with the utmost tenderness, shewing by his assiduous attention a real anxiety for his safety; and the gratitude of the Indian prince and his subjects, which has remained permanent to this day, and been repeatedly manifested by friendly deeds towards the colony, proves them to be accessible to the kind and gentle feelings of humanity.”

“Example is always more powerful than precept,” said Mr. Cotton, “and this Christian conduct, if pursued, may, in time, produce the desired effect. But it must be long before we are able to overcome the prejudices of these savages, who were exasperated against the white people, years before the settlement of Plymouth, by the atrocious conduct of the fishermen and others, who came on *trucking* voyages to these shores; introduced the vice of drunkenness among them; and, in more than one instance, stole away their people for slaves.”

“There seems to be a diversity of disposition in the different tribes,” said Mr. Winthrop, “probably the result of peculiar circumstances in their government and situation; and the degrees of intercourse which they have maintained with other nations. Those who inhabit the sea-coast were at first chiefly affected by the irregular habits of the traders; but as their commerce with the natives increased, others from the interior were allured thither by their admiration of the tinselled gewgaws for which they exchanged the rich furs and other valuable commodities of the country; and the white people—to their shame be it spoken—too often gratified their propensity for strong drink, and then took advantage of their situation to practise on them the grossest impositions.”

“I have seen some of these miserable beings,” said Atherton, “who have acquired the sordid vices of our country-men, without any of the virtues which spring from civilized and Christian life; they present a most melancholy and degrading view of human nature, and strongly contrast with the noble independence and native generosity of the unsophisticated savage.”

“The growth of our plantations,” said Mr. Eliot, “and our persevering endeavours to promote a better spirit, will, I hope, with the blessing of God, in due time bring them to feel their wretchedness, and lead them to seek their true interest and glory, where only they can be found. It would argue an unpardonable neglect in us, to be more remiss in such a cause than the superstitious papists of France, who have sent their priests to convert the tribes which border on their dominions of Canada and Acadia.”

“They are ‘blind leaders of the blind,’” said Mr. Wilson; “and as well might these poor deluded heathen trust in the devilish arts of their own Powaws, as to seek for the light of truth amidst the errors and idolatry of those image-worshipping Jesuits.”

“It is the constant endeavour of the Sachems and *Powaws* or priests,” said Mr. Cotton, “to prevent the English from gaining any ascendancy over the minds of their people, either in civil or religious affairs; they have been accustomed to receive the most implicit obedience from them, and their interest as well as pride is engaged in opposing the influence of our nation.”

“It is not a light thing to undertake the conversion and civilization of such prejudiced and obdurate beings,” said Mr. Winthrop; “and the success will not probably equal our hopes till another generation shall rise up to water the seed which we may plant.”

“Pardon me, sir, for differing from you in opinion on this subject,” replied Mr. Eliot; “but I feel more sanguine in regard to the result of our labours, and hope better things from the natural disposition of these Indians than most of my countrymen. This general belief in their irreclaimable depravity, I find, is disheartening to many who would otherwise feel inclined to help forward the good work.”

“The experience of Mr. Roger Williams, who has now a long time sojourned amongst them,” returned Mr. Winthrop, “has been unfavourable to their character; and though he has not received any personal violence from their hands; but, on the contrary, many important services, he considers them as stupid and depraved in the extreme.”

“The testimony of a man who has himself introduced false doctrines and dissensions which have banished him from our churches,” said Mr. Vane, “can scarcely be admitted as impartial and conclusive evidence.”

“Whatever may be the doctrinal errors of Mr. Williams,” replied Mr. Winthrop, “he has uniformly displayed a solid judgment, and most disinterested and benevolent disposition in his intercourse with society; and his influence over the Indians has been constantly exerted for our advantage.”

“He has certainly shewn a truly Christian spirit of forgiveness,” said Mr. Cotton; “and believing as he does, that he has been injured by the ministers and magistrates of Massachusetts, his continued endeavours to serve them argues a nobleness of mind, as praiseworthy as it is uncommon.”

“The Lord turneth the heart of man, even as the rivers of water are turned,” said Mr. Dudley, one of the most inflexible of the early colonists, “and he can cause the ‘counsel of Ahitophel,’ to subserve his own purposes, and advance the interests of his chosen people.”

“If we suffer ourselves to view the conduct of others through the medium of prejudice,” said Mr. Winthrop, “every action must appear distorted; but in the judgment of charity, the demeanour of Mr. Williams, since his establishment at *Mooshawsick*, entitles him to respect, rather than reproach and suspicion.”

“Errors of opinion,” said Mr. Eliot, “do not always imply hardness of heart; and since he is no longer a disturber, but a promoter of our peace, we are bound to esteem him for his work’s sake, and suffer his objectionable tenets to fade into oblivion.”

“His cunningly devised fables,” said Mr. Dudley, “will not speedily be forgotten by the church of Salem; and he is still bent on spreading them amongst the deluded band who have followed him to the Providence plantations.”

“That is beyond our jurisdiction,” said Mr. Winthrop, “and we are no longer authorized to restrain or punish him; and though we have heretofore, as magistrates, been compelled to admonish him for the errors of his creed, we felt sincere esteem for his private virtues, and our confidence in him induces us, at the present time, to employ him as our agent with the Indians, among whom he is located.”

“His knowledge of their character and language,” replied Mr. Dudley, “may qualify him for the office, though, to me, it would seem less objectionable to select a person who is not given up to ‘strong delusions.’”

“Our choice must necessarily be limited,” returned Mr. Winthrop; “nor would we willingly give him, or any one else, reason to believe us actuated by revenge or personal dislike, as might be the case if we chose another, and perhaps less suitable agent.”

“The charge would be groundless and unworthy of our regard,” said Mr. Dudley, “except so far as we may be justly influenced by an abhorrence of spiritual errors.”

“He has suffered severely for those already,” replied Mr. Winthrop; “enough, I doubt not, to confirm him in his favourite tenet, ‘that punishment for matters of conscience is persecution.’”

“I trust you are not inclining to his opinion in that respect,” returned Mr. Dudley; “but you seem particularly disposed to treat him with lenity, and even consideration.”

“Now, Heaven forbid,” said Governor Vane, “that any individual present should encourage a toleration so destructive of that harmony which unites our churches, and which, once admitted, would open the door for dissensions, and sap the foundations of that pure worship, and those dear-bought privileges, which our great reformers have laboured to establish.”

“I think,” said Mr. Winthrop, “I should sooner become a convert to that opinion, than certain others he has advanced of a totally opposite nature, and which strikingly display the inconsistency of the human character, particularly when given up to the illusions of error.”

“It would seem his wife had most reason to complain of his eccentricity,” said Mr. Cotton, “since he would not even give thanks at his meals when she was present, because she persisted in going to the meeting at Salem from which he had withdrawn, on their refusing to separate from the other churches in New-England.”

“he thought it necessary, perhaps,” said Mr. Wilson, “to reduce her to obedience; as we all know, either by experience or observation, that when the gentler sex are inclined to prove refractory, it is sometimes expedient to use coercive measures.”

“We have never doubted the inclination of *most* husbands to exercise their prerogative, even in trifles,” said Mrs. Winthrop, “and it is not surprising that it should occasionally produce opposition in those who are subjected to it.”

“It certainly cannot excite surprise in this age of the world,” replied Mr. Wilson, “to find women exercising a spirit of contradiction, which has been no novelty since the days of our first mother.”

“It is our duty,” replied Mrs. Winthrop, smiling, “to copy the example of your sex, who are created so much superior to us in wisdom and intelligence, and, of course, you cannot expect us to be deficient in so essential a point.”

“It would indeed be an unreasonable expectation,” said Mr. Wilson; “but I think we are in no immediate danger of having it realized.”

“I hope,” returned Mrs. Winthrop, “our clergy will not adopt the sentiments of Mr. Williams in regard to family discipline, to produce the submission which you seem to consider desirable.”

“That must depend upon the families we have to govern, madam,” said Mr. Wilson, “and their liability to be led away by errors and false doctrines.”

“Mrs. Williams acted from principle,” replied Mrs. Winthrop, “and she was certainly bound to consult her own conscience, even before the will of her husband, who violated his own maxim, in denying her that freedom of opinion which every reasonable being has a right to exercise.”

“That is precisely the idea which Eve entertained on the subject of female independence,” said Mr. Wilson, “when she listened to the tempter, and gratified her caprice and inclination in tasting the ‘fruit of the tree of good and evil;’ and in the same source doubtless originate the enormous errors of Mrs. Hutchinson, which are ‘leading captive silly women,’ and bringing contention into our land.”

“We will suffer that unhappy woman to rest for the present,” replied Mrs. Winthrop, who feared the diversity of sentiment entertained by her guests on that subject might lead to unpleasant debate. “But I doubt if any opinions set forth by my sex have produced more heart-burnings than that which induced Mr. Endicot, in his zeal, to deface the King’s colours.”

“That may be very suitable in a grave magistrate and experienced man,” said Mr. Dudley, “which would be totally unbecoming a woman, whom the apostle exhorts to ‘shamefacedness and sobriety,’ and commands not to ‘teach or usurp authority over the man.’”

“Your appeal is decisive, sir,” replied Mrs. Winthrop, “and I will retire from the discussion before I become yet further involved in ‘questions of doubtful disputation.’”

“Allow me to become your champion, madam,” said Mr. Cotton; “although my arguments may not prove equal to female wit and address, which so often win their cause against the strength of masculine talent and learning.”

“The scruple of Mr. Endicot,” said Governor Vane, “was one which might naturally arise in a devout and reflecting mind; and we may well be allowed to question the lawfulness of displaying on our banners, the cross; that relic of superstition, which was given by the Pope to a Romish King of England, as a symbol of victory.”

“However we may abhor what savours of those popish customs,” said Mr. Cotton, “this hath been so long used as a national standard, that the people had acquired an attachment, and even veneration for it, from which it would have been more politic to wean them by degrees, than to wrest it from them at once, and by force.”

“We may be satisfied with the result, without reverting to the means,” returned Mr. Vane, “since the piety and good sense of the people have at length convinced them of its unlawfulness, and contented them to purge this idolatry from the land.”

“Still,” said Mr. Cotton, “Mr. Endicot was not authorized to cut out the cross, without seeking advice from the court and assistant magistrates; and his rashness gave

occasion to many to speak reproachfully of us, and also endangered the public peace, by inciting a tumult amongst the soldiers, who at first refused to train with the defaced colours.”

“In the belief that he was actuated by tenderness of conscience,” said Mr. Winthrop, “we are bound to pass lightly over his offence, as the court hath already done; and, indeed it required much zeal and courage to abolish an ensign which has been long associated with the military glory of England, and of course cherished with feelings of pride by those who love her prosperity and admire her greatness.”

“If I mistake not,” said Atherton, “I observed our national banner floating from the fort at Castle Island, and therefore presume this scruple has not generally prevailed.”

“It was taken down for a time,” returned Mr. Winthrop, “but our loyalty being called in question on that account, we deemed it proper, as the fort is maintained in the King’s name, to mount his own colours upon it. His Majesty has not more faithful subjects, throughout his wide dominions, than in these colonies of New-England; but there are certain matters touching our religious faith and worship, for which we hold ourselves amenable to our own consciences alone.”

Mr. Winthrop, soon after this conversation, led the way into another apartment; and at the close of a social and agreeable evening, Major Atherton returned to his humble lodgings.

## CHAP X.

Mias l'âme d'un amant retrouve partout les traces de l'object  
aim'e. La nuit et le jour, le calme des solitudes, et le bruit des habitations,  
le temps même qui emporte tant de souvenirs, rien ne peut l'en écarter.  
ST. PIERRE.

SEVERAL succeeding weeks passed away, unmarked by any occurrences worthy of particular detail; and the situation and feelings of Major Atherton at that period, are best described by himself, in a letter addressed to his kinsman at Plymouth, which we have transcribed from the records of the Atherton family, and, with some slight alterations, take the liberty to lay before our readers.

*“To Captain Miles Standish.*

“DEAR SIR: — I have been long in tending to answer your friendly letter, but various circumstances have of late prevented me, though not, as you seem to intimate, forgetfulness of my Plymouth friends, with whom my thoughts are daily conversant. I know not how it is, but my time is continually occupied, and I sometimes vainly wish for solitary evening, to reflect on past events, and look forward to my future prospects. The inhabitants of this place are hospitable, and socially inclined, beyond my expectations, and have successfully exerted themselves to render my situation agreeable. To the polite attentions of Governor Vane and Mr. Winthrop, I am particularly indebted; and at their houses, and those of several other gentlemen of note here, I am at all times welcomed and encouraged to visit with the utmost familiarity. Indeed, I have been repeatedly urged to take up my abode with them altogether during my residence here; but I feel more independent in my present lodgings, humble as they are, and am very comfortably accommodated in the same apartment, as Master Cole informs me, that you occupied when here, in the autumn; and which, he says, is kept for respectable people only; such, I suppose he means, as are willing to pay something above the ordinary price. These separatists, in casting off the works of prelacy, I find have not quite divested themselves of the love of Mammon, which will probably be the last bond of union that is dissolved.

“I have accompanied my friends in several excursions to the neighbouring towns, and I assure you have become a most indefatigable traveller over the deepest snows, through trackless forests, and across frozen streams. I went a short time since to Newtown, which, by the way, is to be called Cambridge in future, with a son of Mr. Winthrop, who, you may tell our friend Peregrine, has almost as much lively humour as himself, but seasoned with rather more discretion. I was much pleased with the situation of that place; it was early intended for a fortified town; and though that plan is now relinquished, it is handsomely laid out, the streets crossing each other at right angles, and a square reserved for a market-place. It lies on the river Charles, and will probably become an important place in the course of time; it is now indeed one of the most thriving villages in the Bay, and I understand a college is to be founded there in the ensuing year. I have also been on the ice to Noddle's Island, and was hospitably entertained in the family of Mr. Maverick, who established himself there before the

arrival of Mr. Winthrop and company. He presides in his sea-girt isle, like one of the rural princes whom Homer celebrates, though (his household excepted) with only the brute creation for his subjects. Or perhaps his military state; for he has built a fort and mounted cannon on it, for defence against the natives— may more resemble the renowned hero of a fairy tale; who, in his solitary dominions, performs those feats of valour and enchantment, which are the wonder of our boyhood; and several negroes whom he has domesticated in his family, with their black glossy skins, yellow eyes and ivory teeth, might well represent those imps which administer to the spells of the magician. My last expedition extended to Saugus, where we were detained several days by a severe snow storm; but the time passed very pleasantly in the society of Mr. Humfrey and his noble consort, who seem to be well accommodated and quite happy, though, I confess, it is the most dreary part of the country I have yet seen; and I could not but feel surprised that they should fix their abode here. Mr. Humfrey is an assistant, and, of course, much engaged in public affairs; though still as deeply interested in agricultural pursuits, as the most laborious farmer in England. I witnessed with admiration, the cheerfulness with which his lady submitted to a situation so different from that to which she had been accustomed, in the ease and luxury of her father's house. From thence I proceeded to Salem, which is worthy of attention, as one of the earliest settlements in the Massachusetts; and where the people, it is said, are far more rigid than in the other plantations. I was absent about a week, and gladly returned to Boston, where I feel more at home than in any other place which I have visited since I left your friendly roof.

“Thus, my dear sir, I have given you a sketch of my various excursions, at the risk of wearying your patience, as a sort of apology for my long silence, and to convince you that I am not chilled by your New-England frosts, nor become inactive and indifferent to the pleasures which are offered to me. On the whole, I am delighted with this part of the country, so far as I can judge at this unfavourable season, and were I to become a settler on these shores, should give it a decided preference over any that I have yet seen. I know your natural partiality for the old colony of Plymouth, and therefore offer this opinion with some diffidence, begging at the same time that you will not think me a heretic in all my sentiments, as well as in matters of religion. The rich variety of scenery, beautiful even in wintry dreariness, the abundance of streams and rivers, the extensive valleys interwoven with lofty and finely wooded hills, all bespeak a land of fruitfulness and abundance, which has been blessed by its great Creator, and needs only the hand of industry to fill the store houses and granaries, even to overflowing. I am pleased too with the manners of the people, and have experienced the highest satisfaction in their conversation and society. There are many men here of extensive learning and eminent talents, who have been distinguished in the first society in England, and whose influence softens the rude and jarring elements of an infant colony, and ameliorates the rigid tenets of the religion they have adopted. Many also have figured in the gayer circles of life, are descended from ancient families, and allied to houses of nobility and distinction; their manners and conversation retain a degree of polish and refinement, happily blended with the primitive simplicity which characterize the inhabitants of Plymouth.

“I must crave your patience while I advance another heterodox opinion, which you will not perhaps readily admit; but they appear to me less bigotted than the good people of your colony, who are always sure to find the cloven foot beneath a surplice, and the devil's spirit in every printed prayer book. Perhaps my semi- puritan descent leads

them to overlook my prelatial errors, or to pass lightly over them, in the hope of converting me by fair words; but, however this may be, they have certainly more charity towards the mother church than many of their Plymouth brethren; though in minor points I must confess they quite equal, — in some perhaps surpass you. My conflict with Master Handcuff the constable, which I mentioned to you in my last letter, was certainly an unrivalled exploit, quite beyond the genius of your laws; and, to avoid a repetition of it, I find I must refrain from all observance of the approaching Christmas, which is expressly forbidden by law. When will rulers learn to let every man judge for himself in matters of conscience and religion?

“As for the news of the place, concerning which you make inquiries, the old story of Mrs. Hutchinson is still a fruitful subject for discussion, and the difference of opinion respecting her doctrines and conduct is a source of much bitter invective. The Governor continues her firm partizan, and it is generally thought that Mr. Cotton is tinged with her errors; though his calm temperament is less easily excited than her enthusiastic imagination. She is undoubtedly an uncommon woman; full of spirit and independence, with great strength of mind, and versatility of talents; an artful address, and a surprising command of language, which is particularly displayed in the subtlety of her controversial arguments. The countenance of Mr. Vane and others has greatly emboldened her; she has withdrawn from public worship, and holds lectures at her own house, where she instructs the *sisters*, who resort to her in great numbers. The most respectable are drawn to listen to her, and none of either sex are excluded who feel inclined to profit by her edifying discourses. Had the magistrates and clergy disregarded her at first, she would probably have sunk into forgetfulness; but their impolitic interference produced a degree of party excitement, and the violence of their opposition constantly increased her disciples, till her influence extends to the most important affairs, both of church and state

“The continued aggressions of the Pequod tribe, are also a theme of complaint and conjecture, and it is feared that hostilities will commence with fatal rigour on both sides, in the approaching spring.

“Added to these copious topics, the conduct of Governor Vane has of late given much offence to some, and much anxiety and regret to others. His popularity is on the decline; and, sensible of it himself, he has requested leave to resign the government, urging as a plea, certain letters received from London, and containing orders for his return. His departure was acceded to by the court, but the church refused their assent, and he was without much difficulty persuaded to remain. I am not sufficiently conversant in public affairs, to give an impartial opinion on this subject; but I confess there is an appearance of dissimulation in his conduct, from which I could wish him free; he certainly used considerable address in exciting the feelings of the parties, and moulding them to his purpose.

“But I will not detain you longer with these minute details, though I wish it were in my power to interest you in the transactions of the times, as far as to introduce you to come hither and be an eye and ear witness, as soon as the season will permit. I hope you will remember that you *almost* promised to join me here in the spring, if not sooner. After all that I have said in this long epistle, I trust you will not think my inclination so much turned towards these ‘meddlesome Massachusetts people,’ as you call them, as to render me forgetful of the kind friends whom I have left at Plymouth. My heart turns to them with grateful remembrance, and I often long to form one of the social group which is

gathered around your blazing fire, and to mingle again with the cheerful circle at Mr. Winslow's. I understand an English vessel has recently arrived at Plymouth; — did it bring any intelligence from Mr. Grey? If there are any letters for me, please to forward them by the first opportunity. I will thank you to remind Peregrine White that he promised to write to me, and that I expect a well filled sheet, whenever he can find leisure from teasing Master Ashly and his other favourites. Tell your little rose-bud, from me — nonsense! — do not tell her any thing. — With kind remembrances to all my friends, believe me, dear, sir, your obliged kinsman,

“EDWARD ATHERTON.”

*Boston, 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1636.*

Major Atherton prepared this letter to send by the master of a pinnace which was hourly expecting to sail for Plymouth; and, at the commencement of a cold and serene evening, he sallied forth to deliver it himself into his hand. There was a great quantity of ice in the harbour, extending to, and connecting several of the nearest islands; but the channel remained clear and open for navigation; and as Atherton remarked its dark and swelling waves, contrasted with the glittering wall, which hemmed it in on either side, his attention was attracted by a vessel rapidly approaching the shore, and its white sails fluttering in the clear moon-light. It proved a small bark scarcely larger than a fishing smack; but Atherton remained till it came to anchor, hoping it was from Plymouth, and would bring him intelligence from his friends. Several persons, attracted by the same object, were collected on the shore, and Atherton, apart from them, continued to pace the beach, till he discovered it was only a trading pinnace from Cape Cod; and feeling no further interest, he returned disappointed to the inn.

He had, however, scarcely taken possession of his solitary apartment, when an unusual bustle below announced the arrival of new guests; and presently the voice of Dame Cole was heard ascending the stairs, in conversation with some persons whom she seemed conducting to their rooms. Atherton's door stood ajar, and as the bustling landlady passed by with the stranger, he was rather surprised to observe two females; but they were so closely enveloped in their cloaks and hoods, that neither their faces nor figures were discernible.

“I am afraid, Mistress, that our poor rooms will not be to your liking,” said Dame Cole, in her softest tone and most complaisant manner, “seeing that my best chamber is already taken up by a hopeful young gentleman, who has been our lodger, it is now almost five weeks, and I may well say, as orderly and generous a youth as one could meet with — though they do tell me he is a prelatist, — the more is the pity, poor young man.”

Atherton had retreated from the door, and did not hear the reply to this eulogium; to which the dame again answered:—

“It doth not become me to boast, although I may say, I endeavour to do all things ‘decently and in order,’ as is commanded; nevertheless, this apartment lacks many conveniences which appertain unto that of Major Atherton.”

“Major Atherton!” repeated one of the females, in a tone of surprise, and with a tremulous voice which thrilled to the heart of Atherton, and which he believed it impossible to mistake.

“Can it be?” he mentally exclaimed. “Is Miriam Grey in reality so near me? Surely no other voice has that sweetness, that indescribable charm!”

In the first impulse of delight and astonishment, he was on the point of rushing from the room to satisfy his doubts; but the recollection of their last interview checked his eagerness, and a moment of reflection convinced him that a mistake was possible; indeed her arrival in Boston was so unexpected, so improbable, that he concluded, with a sigh, he had been deceived by his hopes, and that there might be another voice in New England, which possessed the exquisite melody of her’s. Still he continued to traverse his apartment for some time in a state of strong excitement, often stopping to listen, with almost agitated interest to the low murmur of voices which proceeded from the adjoining apartment. At length, ashamed of his emotion, and resolved to shake it off, he hastily descended to the public rooms to seek further information respecting the vessel, and particularly, the passengers it had brought. In a small room, where his meals were usually served up, he observed a table neatly prepared for supper; and, in the act of warming himself by the fire, a young man of respectable appearance, whose figure was familiar to him. Atherton paused a moment to catch a glimpse of his features, which were then turned from him. The first view satisfied all his doubts, and the well remembered countenance of Henry Weldon convinced him that he had not been mistaken in his former conjectures.

“Mr. Weldon,” exclaimed Atherton, “is it possible that I see you in this place?”

“You may well be surprised, Major Atherton,” said Mr. Weldon, cordially receiving his offered hand; “when we last parted I had little thought of following you so soon, from our comfortable abode at Plymouth.”

“You are not alone I think,” returned Atherton; “I could not be mistaken, when I just now saw Mrs. Weldon and her cousin, though I then almost persuaded myself that my senses were deceived.”

“They insisted on accompanying me,” replied Mr. Weldon; “and though most happy to be thus attended, I would fain, for their sakes, have gone forth alone, and spared them the hardships we may encounter at this inclement season.”

“Whither are you going?” asked Atherton, “and what could induce you,—what could tempt your more delicate companions, to forsake the comforts of home, in the midst of a severe and frozen winter?”

“My home,” replied Mr. Weldon, “is far from hence; and Providence has called me to forsake my plans of ease, and attend to my worldly estate. Mrs. Weldon’s affectionate solicitude will not permit her to remain behind, and Miriam has generously resolved to share our fortunes, at least till her father returns to claim her.”

“And does Miriam Grey go with you to that savage wilderness?” said Atherton, with strong emotion. But, fearful of betraying his feelings, he suddenly stopped and leaning his head upon his hand, remained silent.

“Such is her intention,” replied Mr. Weldon, without appearing to notice his emotion; “but it would take long to relate the causes by which we are actuated, and you will excuse me for the present, as supper is now ready, and we are fatigued and hungry voyagers—and here come my wife and cousin to seek for refreshments.”

Major Atherton raised his head, and beheld Mrs. Weldon, with Miriam Grey leaning on her arm, at that moment entering the apartment.

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY COX AND BAYLIS, GREAT QUEEN STREET.